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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

GENDER AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE FUR TRADE: The Hargrave Correspondence, 1823–1850

by

(C) Elaine H. Chalus

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE
STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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John E. Foster
(SUPERVISOR)

L.G Thomas

Derek Sayer

Date: 6 September 1990

DEDICATION

To Bruce, who continously challenged
me and without whose support I could
not have completed this project,

and

to my parents, who have always
encouraged me to learn

ABSTRACT

Social orders are continuously mutating. The changes that occurred in the fur trade social order in the first half of the nineteenth century are significant, for they reflect the growing dominance of middle-class British customs and beliefs in a frontier society. By concentrating on a comprehensive body of documents, the Hargrave Correspondence between 1823 and 1850, and by using gender as a means of examining this society, this thesis studies the effect that a generation of Victorian Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen made on fur trade society.

As carriers of British nineteenth-century middle-class gender beliefs, James Hargrave and his correspondents entered a society in which the power base was shifting from Indian to white; consequently, instead, of modifying their beliefs, as they grew older and moved into positions of responsibility and power, they incorporated these beliefs into fur trade society. They applied nineteenth-century British middle-class definitions of femininity and masculinity to all of the people they encountered in the fur trade and many of the resultant changes, including the social stratification which divided Indians and mixed bloods from whites, can be linked to the judgments which emerged as a result of these new gender beliefs. These gender beliefs and judgments were shared, reinforced, and implemented through a complex male support network formed by a fabric of personal correspondences which stretched across Hudson's Bay Company territories and acted to transform and homogenize fur trade social order. By the middle of the nineteenth century, these gender beliefs were firmly established in fur trade society and a three-tiered social structure had emerged.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1823, George Barnston[1] gently poked fun at his friend James Hargrave,[2] as he described the rural simplicity of his bachelor life:

> You who are either immersed in business or surrounded with Company in the one Case wallowing in snuff, and in the other enveloped in smoke, either fighting the Battles of state with Bunn or those of love with his Daughter, what pleasure I say can it give to you to listen to the recital of an arduous chase or a long days *(sic)* walk and yet this is all I can give you except I launch out into such effusions as the forgoing to surprize your strong brain as well as my own weak one.... Do you know what my politics at present are?—To eat when I'm hungry drink when I'm thirsty, go to bed when I'm sleepy & rise again when my back's sore—From this you may guess under what government I live[,] not petticoat you may be sure.—[3]

Fourteen years later, Barnston, who was by then a married man with three children, provided Hargrave with another thumbnail sketch of his domestic life:

> God has hitherto blessed us with health, and saving my own moody thoughts, with happy tempers. There is Love too within Doors, and while that is the case many a bitter

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[1] Barnston and Hargrave had met when they served together at York Factory in 1821. Further biographical information on the Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen mentioned in this thesis can be found in the ***Dictionary of Canadian Biography*** or in the appendices of Hudson's Bay Records Society publications.

[2] At this time James Hargrave (1798-1865) was stationed at Red River. Since Hargrave's voluminous correspondence forms the basis of this study, he is dealt with in more detail later in this chapter.

[3] National Archives of Canada (NAC) MG19, A, 21 (Microfilm reel C73) Series 1 fo. 13, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Churchill, 23 December 1823. Note that all NAC documents cited in this thesis were originally studied under Public Archives of Canada (PAC) classification. These documents are listed under NAC and PAC in the bibliography for ease of reference. Since the research for this thesis depended heavily upon microfilm of the Hargrave Correspondence, all citations which were taken from microfilmed information will include the microfilm reel number in parentheses after the NAC call number. Not all documents in the Hargrave Correspondence have folio numbers.

> blast can be borne from without. Time in the winter hangs not heavy on my hands. I have many employments. Three Half Breed Servants attached to the Post I teach in the evenings to read. My own little Boy James is also on the List; he manages Genesis with a lift now and then at a long word. The wife tries Multiplication but is no adept. When my labours as a Dominie make no call upon me, I have recourse to my Books & Microscope. A Tolerable Collection of the Insects of the Country which I have made, I may yet attempt to class & describe.[4]

Except for the clues that Barnston provides with references to the ethnicity of his servants and his residence at a Post, the life that he describes and the social order which it reflects could have been shared by many educated gentlemen living in early nineteenth-century rural Britain. However, as Gentlemen in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, both Barnston and Hargrave spent much of their lives far from the society in which they had been raised. Like other members of the small community of white men who operated one of the world's largest trading concerns, their adherence to a familiar social structure played an important role in moulding a new society. Often stationed at widely separated and isolated posts in the company of few of their peers, frequently married to mixed-blood women who did not share the same cultural background or level of education, well-educated and highly-literate British men such as these used personal letters to establish and maintain a complex male network which stretched across the vast distances of Indian Country.[5] This network provided them not only with intellectual exercise and emotional release, but also with a means of creating a tight sense of community over prodigious distances and a method of moral

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[4] NAC C74 Series 1 fo. 1340, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Martin's Falls, 1 Feb. 1837.

[5] The terms Indian Country and Country were regularly used by Hargrave and his correspondents to refer to the Hudson's Bay Company territory. I have chosen to use these terms in the same way, both for ease of reference as well as for historical veracity.

guardianship which allowed them to share and reinforce the social and cultural mores of their home civilisation.

The letters written to and by James Hargrave between 1823 and 1850 form such a web. They cover the entirety of Hudson's Bay Company territories and stand as a discrete body of evidence which reflects the rigidifying social order in the fur trade. More significantly, their presentation of the changing boundaries of male-female and male-male relationships over time emphasises the important role these men played in defining the social structure of this frontier society. When the Correspondence began, fur trade society was still organised on pre-industrial lines. The trade had just entered its consolidation period and was only starting to adjust to the changes brought about by the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.[6] When this sample of the Correspondence ends in 1850, class consciousness among the Gentlemen had emerged and premonitory changes have occurred to restructure relationships throughout the Country.

An examination of Hargrave's correspondence shows that the gradual changes and stratifications in fur trade society during this period can be approached from any of four perspectives: age, class, ethnicity, and gender. While all of these perspectives yield significant insights, gender provides the most comprehensive coverage, since it is a constitutive and inextricable

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[6] By 1820, both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company had come to the realisation that union was desirable and since the British government had agreed to sweeten the settlement by granting the new company a trading monopoly over all of the land west of Rupert's Land, negotiations moved along rapidly. On 2 July 1821, the British Parliament ratified the new monopoly. The new license, obtained on 5 December 1821, guaranteed the monopoly for a period of twenty-one years. John. S. Galbraith, ***The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-1869,*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), pp. 3-13; See also Glyndwr Williams, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Fur Trade 1670-1870," ***The Beaver,*** Outfit 314:2, First printed in Autumn 1970, (Reprinted 1983, 1987): 42-50.

element of both class and ethnicity, as well as an important means of evaluating changes due to age. By concentrating on the information about gender found in the Correspondence, this thesis will trace the evolution of the social order in the Country between 1823 and 1850 and show how hardening gender beliefs, which not only redefined femininity and masculinity but also underscored all forms of class relations in nineteenth-century Britain, were echoed in nineteenth-century fur trade society. In doing so, it attests to the validity of G.F.G. Stanley's belief that the social order of a frontier society owes more to the social and cultural infrastructure of its parent society than it does to the frontier experience. It also establishes the existence of a male network of Hudson's Bay Company officers whose connections helped to disseminate gender beliefs and encourage conformity; thus, leading to increasingly strict, class-conscious interpretations of gender by 1850. Finally, it demonstrates that gender can be used effectively outside of the narrow feminist setting where it seems destined to be trapped. Historians who use gender to examine the past can gain significant insights into social organisation.

Before moving on to a discussion of the documents, it is necessary to have some general background information about the Canadian historical milieu in which the thesis is based. In 1940, G.F.G. Stanley used the annual report of the Canadian Historical Association as a platform to criticise Canadian historians' tendency to unquestioningly adopt the Frontier thesis as means of explaining Canadian history.[7] In his view, the seductive simplicity of the Frontier thesis lured historians away from the complex

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[7] George F.G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis," ***Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1940,*** pp. 105-117.

realities and nuances of the Canadian experience. In addition, Stanley felt that Turner's emphasis on change over continuity led historians to believe—mistakenly—that the frontier experience, in conjunction with the isolation and alienation of frontier communities from their parent societies, resulted in the creation of a unique new society. Instead, Stanley asserted that pioneer society was essentially imitative, not creative. The people who settled on the frontier brought with themselves the prevalent values and beliefs that defined their native societies. These mores were not erased as a result of the frontier experience. While settlers' initial experiences often called for the modification of their primary or economic mores in order to ensure survival, once this was assured, these adaptations became less significant. During the new society's consolidation period, the settlers devoted their energy to building a strong, recognisable social order that created a link with the parent and served as a symbol of the new society's rise from 'barbarism'. This process relegated primary mores to the background and elevated the relatively unaltered secondary mores which regulated the social order. Thus, from the end of the survival period, the new society gradually began to take on the social order of its parent and finally emerged with a culture not significantly dissimilar to it. According to Stanley, this two-part process resulted in the creation of Canada as a country whose economic structures have been shaped by the environment, but whose social and political structures carry the weight of British tradition.

It is somewhat ironic to use as recent an historical perspective as gender to examine the viability of as venerable a thesis as Stanley's. While gender beliefs underlie all societies and gender is one of the most tenacious of secondary mores, the use of gender by historians is still in its infancy.

Gender is an analytical tool which was originally adopted from the social sciences by feminist historians who were striving to overcome the male bias of traditional history and wanted to find a methodology which included women as valid historical actors. Simply re-writing history to include women did not work, for it either created a hagiography celebrating 'Great Women' or it created a 'her-story' which filled in historical gaps regarding the activities of women in the past without making their presence historically important or their contributions any more worthy of notice.[8] A proliferation of academic research on the topic of gender in the past fifteen years has led to a flurry of publications in the social sciences. Unfortunately, this has not led to consensus. In fact, the sides in the gender debate appear to be moving further

[8] This point is perhaps best related by Joan Wallach Scott on the third page of her introduction to ***Gender and the Politics of History,*** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). However, many others have also recognised that such a problem exists and several of these deserve mention: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Natalie Zemon Davis, Gerda Lerner, Bonnie G. Smith, Susan Mosher Stuard, Joan Kelly, Christine Fauré, Anna Davin, Sally Alexander, Juliet Mitchell, and Ann Oakley.

apart as the arguments are becoming more acrimonious and the participants now range all the way from radical feminists to neo-conservatives.[9]

While it is important to acknowledge the existence of this debate in the social sciences and to recognise the fact that its eventual outcome will have some effect on the use of gender for historians, it is not of paramount importance in the development of the present argument. It is by far more important to define gender in a historical perspective and clarify its terminology. For the purposes of this study, Joan Wallach Scott's definition will be employed. Scott sees gender as "the social organisation of sexual difference,"[10] and "... a constitutive element of social relationships based on

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[9] R.W. Connell, ***Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics,*** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 38. Although both Nicholson's and Shapiro's works are informative and well-researched [Linda J. Nicholson, "Towards a Method for Understanding Gender," in ***Gender and History,*** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). ; and Judith Shapiro, "Gender Totemism," in ***Dialectics and Gender: Anthropological Approaches,*** Richard R. Randolph, David M. Schneider, and May N. Diaz eds., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988).], Connell provides the most detailed discussion of the operative logic behind theories of gender, as well as carefully honed analyses of their strengths and weaknesses. Like Scott, he locates three separate strands in the gender debate, but not necessarily the same strands. Connell sees current research as divided among extrinsic, intrinsic, and practise-based theories. Extrinsic theories of gender locate the determinants of sexual inequality in external factors which may been seen as uncontrollable and/or fixed. This includes biological determinism and various branches of Marxist feminism (including social reproduction theory and dual systems theory). Intrinsic theories of gender locate the determinants of sexual inequality in such internal factors as custom and power relationships. These include sex role and categorical theories. Sex role theories centre male/female behavioural differences on learned responses to distinct social expectations rather than on biology. Role behaviours, expectations, and positive and negative reinforcements maintain sexual inequalities. Categorical theories link sexual inequality to power relationships. These conflicts of power emerge from a social order which is perceived to be made up of a small number of opposing categories—usually only two—which are related to each other through power and conflict of interest. Theories subsumed in this division may as diverse as those which debate the importance of nature versus culture or those which examine sexual inequality by means of psychoanalytic and semiotic approaches. Connell sees practice-based theory emerging in response to weaknesses which are inherent in the other groupings. He defines this new approach to gender as a means of examining the sexual politics upon which all gender relationships rest. As such, it presupposes the social construction of sexuality and the contextuality of masculinity and femininity, while also recognising the importance of power and personal-structural interrelationships.

[10] Joan Wallach Scott, "Introduction," in ***Gender and the Politics of History,*** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 3. See also Suzanne J. Kessler, and Wendy McKenna, ***Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach,*** (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), p. vii.

perceived differences between the sexes,...a primary way of signifying relationships to power."[11] In turn, these relationships of power form and are formed by hierarchical social structures.[12] The breadth of this definition allows historians to remove gender from what Ronald Hyam disparagingly calls "the poverty of feminism"[13] and apply it to the study of all male-female as well as male-male relationships—in other words, to use it to study the establishment of social order.

When discussing gender, the terms *gender beliefs* and *gender roles* are frequently used. *Gender beliefs* act as the infrastructure of any society and provide individuals with a means of defining themselves in relation to other members of the society.[14] Thus, there is an inherent reciprocity in gender beliefs, in that male-female or male-male relationships can only exist unchanged while both partners accept the definitions of self that have been created.[15] It is essential to understand that these gender beliefs are created by the translation of perceived sexual differences into social and psychological polarities, which are then encoded in the continuously changing behaviours,

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[11] Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," ***American Historical Review***, vol. 91 no.5 (December 1986): 1067.

[12] Scott, "Women's History," in ***Gender***, p. 25.

[13] Ronald Hyam, ***Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience***, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, Publication forthcoming fall 1990), p. 17. In his introduction, Hyam reviews problems with the psycho-sexual, feminist, and literary approaches which have all been used to discuss sexuality. While he freely admits that many feminist writers are more interested in gender than in sex, he neglects to examine any of their works. By doing so, he loses an opportunity to shed light on the infrastructure of beliefs which makes up the bed upon which the sex he is studying takes place. Instead, he focuses the poverty of feminism—quite correctly—on its inability to break out of the dogmatic and rabidly anti-male stance taken by some militant feminists who perceive oppression everywhere and denounce all sexual expression, excluding lesbianism, as indicative of male dominance and violence. This narrow, biased, and unsophisticated aspect of feminist studies has caused many historians not to look beyond the obvious shortcomings of women's history to grasp the importance of feminist-initiated tools such as gender.

[14] Elizabeth Fox Genovese, ***Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South***, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 29.

[15] Arthur Brittan, ***Masculinity and Power***, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 3.

attitudes, customs, and values that societies designate as 'masculine' and 'feminine.'[16] It must also be understood that while gender beliefs rest on the foundation of actual physical distinctions between the sexes, these distinctions do not in themselves provide enough differentiation to explain the full range of social divisions which have been incorporated in the sexually distinct behaviours and societally differentiated activities which make up *gender roles*.[17] As a result, gender must be seen as the way that each culture interprets and encodes the physical differences between the sexes, creates polarised behaviours and attitudes, and affixes the labels of masculine and feminine. These gender roles include self-concepts, psychological traits, and specific family, occupational, and political roles.[18] Since gender is based on knowledge about sexual difference and the availablility and validity of this knowledge varies across societies, as well as time and place, gender is both contextual and mutable.[19] Paradoxically, individuals and organisations within societies normally view the behavioural expectations imposed by gender as reflections of fixed, 'natural,' or even sacred divisions.[20]

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[16] Jean Lipman-Blumen, ***Gender Roles and Power,*** (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984), p. 3. See also H.T. Wilson, ***Sex and Gender: Making Cultural Sense of Civilization,*** (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1989), p. 2, and Brittan, p. 1.

[17] Scott, "Introduction," p. 3. See also Carol P. MacCormack, "Nature, Culture, and Gender: A Critique," in ***Nature, Culture and Gender,*** Carol P. MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 1.

[18] Lipman-Blumen, pp. 2-3. Judith Shapiro, "Gender Totemism," in ***Dialectics and Gender: Anthropological Approaches,*** Richard R. Randolph, David M. Schneider, and May N. Diaz, eds., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 1.

[19] Historians who note changes in the range of socially acceptable masculine or feminine behaviours in particular historical contexts must also be careful to determine whether or not the gender beliefs which underlie the behaviours are actually changing, or if the variations are superficial and reflect only periodic loosening or tightening of the sanctions defining social acceptability. See Kessler, p. 15.

[20] Shapiro, p. 1. See also Kessler, p. 4, Scott, p. 4, and MacCormack, p. 1. While these 'natural' sexual divisions which are reflected in gender beliefs play an important role in the cultural mythology which defines male-female or male-male relationships, they may be mitigated in face-to-face contact. Although the contemporary and pervasive interpretation of

As a method of ordering reality, gender establishes inequalities, polarities, and differences between the sexes which over time have been formalised in male prerogatives which are understood to be 'natural' or 'fixed'. In turn, these prerogatives have been enshrined in an hierarchical social structure and inextricably intertwined with power and class. For the purpose of this thesis, *power* will be defined as a process:

> whereby individuals or groups gain or maintain the capacity to impose their will upon others, to have their way recurrently, despite implicit or explicit opposition, through invoking or threatening punishment, as well as offering or withholding rewards.[21]

Gender relations privilege men as a group and are incorporated in a system which grants them power.[22] In order to maintain this power, they become defenders of the system which grants it. However, this may lead to the impression that gender beliefs are translated into a simple male-female dyadic power structure; this is obviously false. Instead, inter-and intra-sexual power relations are intricate, convoluted, and highly susceptible to change.

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gender may assign a woman or socially inferior man subordinate character traits and a correspondingly limited range of acceptable activities, such individuals may be granted honorary 'male' status and entrance to the power group if they possess positive male traits (as acknowledged by the male power group) or their behaviour conforms with those associated with the power group. Thus, we have accounts of exceptional women who have operated successfully in male roles and rosters of working-class or mixed-blood men who were accepted into positions of power and authority. On the other hand, the very deep structural position that gender plays in defining the relationships that serve to make up our civilisation means that any alterations in the actual structure of gender will result in societal reorganisation. Just as changing the foundation of a building without removing the building is an exceedingly slow and difficult procedure, so is changing gender beliefs. As a result, it is not surprising to note that changes in gender are achieved slowly and only after prolonged resistance.

21 Lipman-Blumen, p. 6.

22 There are some male liberationists who would argue that the system which arises from the foundation of gender beliefs does not grant men power, only the illusion of power, and thus actually helps to perpetuate male oppression. While this may be valid, even the illusion of power implies a belief in that power and results in actions to safeguard it.

At first glance, gender beliefs do divide the sexes indiscriminately into two groups; however, these groups are then internally reticulated to create a complex web. These divisions result from the extension of gender beliefs to same-sex relationships, as well as the entrelacement of gender and class. Keith Wrightson's definition of *class* is the most applicable given the social order found in both early nineteenth-century Britain and the Indian Country. Wrightson defines social class as a group of loosely connected individuals who are linked together by a number of factors held in common:

> comparable economic position,...similarities of status, power, lifestyle, and opportunities, by shared cultural characteristics and bonds of interaction....[23]

The combination of characteristics and behaviours which identify gender roles are present in the factors which lead to the establishment of social class; thus, those select sub-groups which best fill the requirements established in the ideal fill the power positions as the decision makers in the social hierarchy. They then re-define the other sub-groups according to their proximity to the ideal. The method of differentiation involves the ascription of opposing, negative, or female traits to these other sub-groups according to their position in the hierarchy. In other words, the decision makers define themselves as male and take for themselves the socially desirable masculine traits and behaviours. They separate themselves from other less powerful groups by seeing them as less male and assigning them proportionally more feminine traits and behaviours. By extrapolation then, gender plays a significant historical role, for it serves as the foundation of diverse power relationships.

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[23] Keith Wrightson, "The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches," in ***The World We have Gained***, Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith, and Keith Wrightson, eds., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 196.

> Gender roles are the model for power relationships between generations, socio-economic classes, religious, racial, and ethnic groups, as well as between imperial powers and their colonies, and between less developed and post-industrialized societies.[24]

By removing gender from the tightly laced corset of feminist studies and allowing it to expand naturally, it may prove to be one of the most useful perspectives for studying the social order of the past. However, in order for gender to become a primary analytical focus for historians, they must first learn to see it as one of the fundamental threads that defines a society.

In order to understand the implementation of nineteenth-century British gender beliefs in fur trade society, it is important to realise that Britain remained home for James Hargrave and his correspondents. By 1826, Hargrave had been working in the fur trade for six years and had been away from Scotland for the same amount of time; however, he still considered Scotland his home:

> Tis true my relations are now in Canada and a wish to visit that country is the natural consequence, but when I ask myself where is my Home—the blue hills of Scotland are present in my mind with all their attraction.[25]

He was not alone.[26] The majority of the Gentlemen around whom this thesis is centred were natives of Britain, and their letters to each other are filled

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[24] Lipman-Blumen, pp. 4-5.

[25] NAC MG19, A, 21 Vol. 21. Series 1, James Hargrave to William Lockie, Red River, 3 January 1826. Hargrave viewed his employment in the fur trade as a long-term investment in his future. While he longed to visit his family in Canada and return to Scotland, his commitment to his job and his desire to better his economic and social position took precedence. When he finally did take a furlough in 1837, he had already been promoted to Chief Trader and had been in charge of York district for two years. Significantly, he spent the majority of his furlough in Britain, travelling to Canada to visit his family just before he returned to the Country.

[26] In June 1826, George Barnston echoed Hargrave's feelings of homesickness and his drive for economic independence:

> How I long to revisit Scotland, to revive those ties which the Atlantic & Six Years Absence have partly broken. but no—tis impossible. I return not

with 'Home news'.[27] Their letters provided them with a means of disseminating the information they gleaned from their correspondence, their trips back home, or from the newspapers and books they savoured.[28] Remaining in touch with the changes taking place in their native land and discussing and analysing contemporary economic, political, and social occurrences undoubtedly helped lessen their feelings of isolation and also provided them with intellectual exercise. These ties to Britain ensured that

---

> openly to my native Country till it has pleased providence to bless me with a competency—in the meantime let me drag out my days in the land of the stranger whether this or another it matters not further than its bringing me nearer the goal of my wishes....

NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 96, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Alexander, 2 June 1826.

[27] Rather surprisingly, the Canadas and discussions of Canadian politics are almost nonexistent in Hargrave's correspondence. The only time that Canadian affairs become important is during the rebellion of 1837. Other references tend to be very general or very specific, centring as they do around such things as periodic epidemics of cholera or gossip about fur trade acquaintances who had retired to settle in the Canadas.

[28] A high level of literacy and a good knowledge of arithmetic and accounting were prerequisites for a Hudson's Bay Company Gentleman. Between 1823 and 1850 the importance of a good education rose, as chances for promotion became more closely tied to the extent of a man's education. Many of the men in Hargrave's circle of correspondents appear to have been avid readers, subscribing to British and Scottish publications and placing regular orders for books. The best insight to these gentlemen's delight in reading and their diverse tastes is found in Donald Ross' response to Hargrave's discussion of his library:

> you wish to tantalise me with the prospect of having a peep into your Book Case—but I meant to have played you a nice trick on the same score last fall when I desired that you would examine the Condition of my box from home, that package contained a variety of fine things—such as *Logan's Highlands & Highlanders—Hoods Comic Annual, Friendship Offering,* the *Literary Souvenir,* The *Penny Magazine,* The *Saturday Magazine,* the *Penny Cyclopedia,* The *Olio,* the *Mirror,* the *Literary Gazette* and the *Atlas*; What a feast for a hungry book worm.— next year if my letters get home I expect in addition to the continuation of these—the whole of *Sir Watty's Novels*—besides other fineries such as *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pilgrims Progress.*—and some others which I do not now recollect.—I daresay you will think it altogether a strange selection—but I have already got a good stock of standard works to resort to when I am in the mood—my taste is decidedly for light reading this does not certainly proclaim any great depth of intellect or soundness of understanding on my part but I cannot help it—my belief is that a man should regulate his reading much in the same manner as he does his other appetites, and propensities—by enjoying that which affords him the greatest share of satisfaction, providing that its tendency is not to injure himself or any one else—

NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 709, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 28 December 1833.

they remained aware of changing British gender beliefs and the way that they were being translated in nineteenth-century British society.

Whig historians have traditionally viewed the nineteenth century as a period of ever-increasing change, leading inevitably to the modern, urban, and industrial world of the twentieth century. While this interpretation has its drawbacks, it also has a certain validity. For Britain, the nineteenth century was a time of change, modernisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation. Over the course of the century, the *ancien régime* of the eighteenth century was replaced with the familiar structures of modern industrial capitalist society. However, this shift did not occur overnight, nor was the rate of change uniform. English urban areas and rural regions with strong trade affiliations felt the changes first, far before they became pervasive enough to significantly affect the outlying, rural, and predominantly agrarian regions. The events and occurrences that changed the face of Britain and the life of its inhabitants were parts of processes deeply rooted in the past. What made the nineteenth century different from earlier periods was that the cumulative effects of the changes touched all socio-economic groups, not just the very rich.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a number of events occurred which helped to change the economic, political, and social structure of British society. Economically, industrialisation and agricultural improvement increased British wealth and prosperity. Although these gains did not translate automatically into increased personal wealth, economic benefits began to trickle down and enrich the lives of the working classes by the middle of the century. The most significant economic legislation of the period centred on the Corn Laws, which reflected the change from traditional

economics dominated by the upper classes to laissez-faire capitalism under the ægis of a new group of middle-class industrial capitalists. The Corn Law was passed in 1815 as a protectionist measure to safeguard English grain farmers and artificially elevate grain prices by placing strict limitations on the importations of foreign grain. While its purpose was to help the economy re-adjust after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, its protectionist stance served only to create hardship.[29] As a result, it was unsuccessfully modified in 1828 and finally repealed in 1846 after a long period of anti-Corn Law agitation. The repeal marked the predominance of middle-class free trade forces in Britain and characterised the country's transition to an industrial nation.[30]

Politically, the reforms which started in 1828 began a process that resulted a century later in universal enfranchisement. However, the first twenty-five years of the century did not foreshadow liberal changes.[31] English fears of rebellion, revolution, and anarchy had been spawned by the French Revolution and led to a fear of reform which effectively prevented badly needed political or constitutional changes. At the same time, changes were occurring in the social order that increased the need for reform. Reforms began to be instituted in 1828 and by 1850 some important pieces of legislation had been passed. Several of these bear mention, as they provide insights into the changing beliefs of the period. The repeal of the Test and

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[29] The Corn Laws were instituted for the benefit of the propertied class. However, even they did not benefit, for the artificial inflation of grain prices was reflected in higher bread prices. Since bread was the staple food of the poor, higher prices ate into their incomes and limited their ability to purchase other farm products. In addition, the Corn Law created wild price fluctuations, as stipulations in the Law allowed foreign grain to flood the market whenever shortages of local grain drove the prices over 80 shillings a quarter. David Thomson, ***England in the Nineteenth Century,*** (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp. 35-36.

[30] ***Idem.***, pp. 35-37.

[31] According to E.P. Thompson, the ultraconservative if not reactionary tenor of the first quarter of the century can be traced directly back to the anti-jacobinism and counter-revolutionary aftermath of the French Revolution. E.P. Thompson, ***The Making of the English Working Class,*** (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 888.

Corporation Acts (1828) and the Roman Catholic Relief Act (1829) extended religious emancipation and political privileges to Protestant dissenters and Roman Catholics, thus characterising the secularisation of the society. The Reform Bill (1832) set the stage for further political reform by providing a significant though small extension of the franchise which ensured the partial democratisation of the government. The Poor Law Amendment Act (1834) established workhouses and instituted nation-wide regulations for dealing with the problem of the poor. It also reflected a middle-class society's growing belief in the virtues of self-help and respectability, as well as its association of poverty with crime and the (believed) inherent moral flaws of the poor as a group.

The most noteworthy social development in early nineteenth-century Britain was the development of a class society and the corresponding stratification of the classes. Since gender is closely tied to class and specific interpretations of gender are often adopted as signifiers of class,[32] it is worth briefly outlining the social order during this period. According to E.P. Thompson, English history's chronicler of class, England had a class society by the time the Reform Bill was passed in 1832. He identifies the beginnings of class society in the Jacobin agitation of the 1790s and concludes that by 1832 the working class had achieved class consciousness and self-identification. Implicit in this process was the development of class conflict as well as a corresponding belief in the mutability of the social order

[32] Interpretations of gender beliefs are never uniform throughout a society. While the beliefs which form the foundation of the society do not change, the constructions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' vary, as do the gender roles which proscribe appropriate values, behaviours, and activities. Thus, both the middle-class Victorian interpretation of femininity, with its creation of the 'cult of true womanhood,' and its male counterpart the 'cult of the gentleman' were as much emblems of the middle-class identity as the strictly economic and commercial divisions which divided the middle class from other classes.

and the positive power of change. During this period, the middle class, which expanded in size and economic power, became clearly differentiated from the working class and aligned its interests with those of the upper class in support of the status quo. At the same time, the working class began to solidify and some of its members came to espouse a progressively more radical democratic idealism.[33]

While there can be little doubt that class sentiments did exist by 1850, it is unlikely that they were as universal in 1832 as Thompson implies. As previously mentioned, changes in nineteenth-century Britain did not occur uniformly; consequently, many of the outlying areas of England and Scotland retained elements of the pre-industrial social order for longer periods of time.[34] Peter Laslett portrays this pre-industrial order as a one-class society based on the structure of the patriarchal household where

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[33] See E.P. Thompson for an exhaustive study of the factors leading to these changes.

[34] According to Thompson (pp. 12-13), the Scottish and English experiences differ until the 1820s. See also A. Allan MacLaren, "Introduction," in ***Social Class in Scotland***, A. Allan MacLaren, ed., (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1976), pp. 1-11. MacLaren shows that these differences were not so great as to preclude grouping the Scottish and English social orders for the present purpose. In his introduction to ***Social Class in Scotland***, MacLaren seeks the historical truth behind the pervasive myth of a Golden Age pre-industrial Scotland. The myth centres around the belief that pre-industrial Scotland was an egalitarian, classless society corrupted and destroyed by the encroachment of nineteenth century English industrial capitalism. The ideological hero of this society is the poor but resourceful young man who succeeds in rising to a higher station in life through determination and the combined efforts of his parents and himself. In addition, his way is made easier in a society that stresses education as a means of social betterment and contains institutions which facilitate his attempts to be educated. MacLaren points out that the egalitarianism present in the myth refers to equality of opportunity, not economic, political, or social equality. He also suggests that Scotland's much-touted equality of educational opportunity was actually a means of elite recruitment, although the lack of a comparable English system made educational opportunity in Scotland appear universal. Consequently, he concludes that while pre-industrial Scotland was essentially egalitarian, it was never classless. The veracity of the 'Scottish myth' lies in the fact that the social distance between classes in pre-industrial Scotland was often slight. Consequently, upward mobility was possible through education as well as personal encouragement. James Hargrave can be used as an example of an individual who lived the myth. As a poor boy, he was fortunate enough to receive a good education. Upon arriving in Canada, his education granted him a position in the fur trade and a combination of hard work and perspicacity resulted in social and economic betterment.

individuals and relationships were defined according to clearly differentiated degrees of status. Marriage was a prerequisite for full participation and low-status groups such as servants, children, and women were subsumed in the male-dominated household. These households were then subsumed, first in the village community and then in the larger households of the nobility and the monarch. This complex structure was held together by vertical relationships of patronage and clientage, paternalism and deference. While conflict and tension often existed between the groups, a multi-class society did not develop, for only one of the groups had the ability to unify and take national action. Implicit in this model was a belief that the the social order was ordained, fixed, and 'natural'.[35]

Keith Wrightson explains this proto-industrial world by creating a framework of class that accommodates the pre-industrial world described by Peter Laslett and allows for the development of class along Thompsonian lines. While not disavowing the validity of the Laslettian model, Wrightson notes that it does not sufficiently allow for local variations or for a variety of complex motivational factors which may have resulted in deferential behaviours simply for the sake of social survival, not because of any specific identification with a unified underlying belief system. Instead, Wrightson suggests that a much more realistic understanding of the period can be gained if the society is seen as complex and dynamic, simultaneously aligned vertically and horizontally. By defining class in broad, descriptive terms based on similarities of *mentalités*, Wrightson uncovers a world where the vertical relationships of paternalism and deference could exist in one

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[35] Peter Laslett, ***The World We Have Lost***, 3rd ed., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984), pp. 1-101.

locale and under one set of circumstances while the horizontal structures of class consciousness and class conflict co-existed in another place and under different circumstances. As such he defines a middle way that accounts for the variations in class formation in early nineteenth-century Britain (as caused by factors such as isolation, urbanisation, or industrialisation), and provides an historical model which emphasises the element of continuity in change.[36]

Wrightson's model is also important because it is applicable to an examination of fur trade social order. In 1821, when the Hudson's Bay Company amalgamated with the North West Company, it was essentially a pre-industrial institution operating in a pre-industrial social order.[37] Its charter had been granted in 1670[38] and its operations on the Bay had been based on the household model of pre-industrial England. In many ways, the organisation which James Hargrave joined in 1821 was still an eighteenth-century concern. Increasingly cutthroat competition between the companies after the turn of the nineteenth century had pre-empted social change in the decades prior to the union. The pre-industrial order adapted well to the circumstances found in the Country. Officers and men lived together in the

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[36] Keith Wrightson, "The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches," in ***The World We Have Gained,*** Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith, and Keith Wrightson, eds., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 177-202.

[37] Both Jennifer Brown and John Foster have applied Laslett's model to the early fur trade. However, this model does not allow for the development of class consciousness present in Red River by the middle of the century; consequently, I feel that the synthesis presented by Wrightson is more applicable. See Jennifer Brown, "Company Men and Native Families: Fur Trade Social and Domestic Relations in Canada's Old Northwest," Doctoral Dissertation, (University of Chicago, 1976); and John E. Foster, "The Country-born in the Red River Settlement: 1820-1850," Unpublished Ph. D thesis, (University of Alberta, 1972).

[38] Glyndwr Williams, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Fur Trade 1670-1870," ***The Beaver,*** Outfit 314:2, First printed in August 1983, (Reprinted 1987): 4-5. See also John S. Galbraith, ***The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-69,*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), pp. 3-13; and Harold A. Innis, ***The Fur Trade in Canada,*** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), p. 119.

posts and were differentiated into seven discrete grades of employment by their situations with the Company.[39] These gradations of service were also reflected in gradations of status. As in pre-industrial England, the term *gentleman* divided the society into two unequal sections.[40] The Chief Factor acted as father or master of the household; the gentlemen filled the role of sons, temporarily unequal in power but with an inherent possibility of rising to the position of the father; the servants, or men as they were often called, filled the static role of life-cycle servants or employees. The small number of individuals who made up the contingents on the posts, especially after Governor George Simpson's drastic reduction of fur trade personnel in the 1820s, combined with the isolation of the posts, created tightly-knit households.[41] The face-to-face nature of this world must always be borne in mind, for the distance between social gradations appears to have often been mitigated by personal feelings or family ties.[42]

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[39] Robert Michael Ballantyne, ***Hudson Bay,*** (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1902), p. 26. Ballantyne lists the grades of employment in descending order of importance: Chief Factor, Chief Trader, clerk, apprentice clerk, postmaster, interpreter, and labourer. Employees above the rank of interpreter were considered Gentlemen, while those below the rank of postmaster were considered servants. Postmasters inhabited a rather ambiguous position, because this situation allowed almost no possibility of advancement, unlike all of the other situations granted to Gentlemen. By the middle of the nineteenth century the men who occupied this situation were often the well-educated mixed-blood sons of former officers. Their relegation to this low status in the Hudson's Bay Company hierarchy emphasised the position of mixed bloods in fur trade society, and especially their societal position in the mind of Governor George Simpson.

[40] Laslett, p. 27.

[41] Some of the inland posts were very small. In 1841, Richard Grant sent two of his men to York Factory. This, he complained, left him with only four others: "2 to attend the fishing 1 as cook, buttler *(sic)* & cattle herd and the last to cut and haul fire wood 2 miles distance, cut logs & saw them by himself...." NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fos. 1905-6, R. Grant to James Hargrave, Oxford House, 1 February 1841.

[42] Personal contact between officers and servants created an intimacy which sometimes allowed strong bonds to be formed. In his letters to John George McTavish in the early 1830s, Hargrave often included greetings to MacTavish from the servant George Gibeault: "George—poor lad begs to be mentioned in every letter I write you. I have scarcely ever seen so attached a servant—." However, intimacy could also bring about evaluations of character which were anything but flattering. For instance, in 1827 Hargrave responded to charges made by a servant named St. Denis who felt that he had been wrongly billed for medical service that he had neither wanted nor ordered:

Although created along the lines of the pre-industrial English household, the overwhelmingly male nature of the posts skewed this structure. While early Committee directives had encouraged Hudson's Bay Company employees to lead monastic lives by forbidding them from bringing their wives or associating with Indian women, these policies were ignored. Country marriages with Indian women soon formed an essential element of fur trade society and the women performed important economic roles.[43] However, even these women were still peripheral elements in what was essentially a one-sexed society.[44] Between the 1820s and 1840s, Indian women were replaced first by mixed-blood women and then by white women as the officers' marital choices changed. Concomitantly, women's roles became more circumscribed and their economic importance disappeared.[45] Thus, fur trade society became even more predominantly male, except at Red River where the

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> The plain matter of the fact is that the fellow is a gabbling half-witted fool—a laboring man enough when kept in his own place, but when allowed the privileges of a rational creature sticks neither to truth nor reason.—.

NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to John George McTavish, York Factory, 6 July 1831; NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, Memo of Goods from England & Ship 1827.

[43] Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Women in the Fur Trade Society of the Canadian West." (Doctoral Dissertation. Queen Mary College, University of London, 1975). See also Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," ***The Beaver***, Outfit 303: 3 (Winter 1972): 4-21; and ***Many Tender Ties***, (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980).

[44] The fur trade was not unique as a one-sexed society; all British imperial enterprises reflected the same general structure. See Hyam, ***Empire and Sexuality***.

[45] Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***. See also Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz, ***Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay 1600-1870***, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983). Ronald Hyam sees this pattern of male-female relationships in the fur trade as being a classic example of the patterns of sexual interaction which could be found on frontier trading posts across the British empire. Changes in attitudes towards alliances with native women varied according to the locale. In the Raj, intermarriage with native women trickled to a halt by the end of the eighteenth century; in Africa and other parts of the Empire, alliances with native women became unpopular after the 1870s. See also Hyam, pp. 95-215.

translation of nineteenth-century English class society created a role for women as social and moral guardians.[46]

By the 1840s,the Correspondence indicates that class sentiments had emerged among the Gentlemen in the fur trade, and specifically those located in Red River Settlement. Although the tightly knit corps of current and retired Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen and their families formed the upper class, loosely organised groups of individuals who shared common cultural and economic positions as well as similarities of status, power, lifestyle, and opportunities also developed. The most significant of these were the Métis.[47] As a group, the Métis did not conform to Victorian societal norms. They did not believe in the gospels of work or self-help; they did not subscribe to British notions of respectability; nor did the Gentlemen feel that they were sufficiently serious of character to be considered trustworthy. In addition, they posed a continual threat to the monopoly of the Company. Consequently, the Gentlemen believed that they presented a threat to the

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[46] Leonore Davidoff, ***The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season,*** (London: Croom Helm, 1973). Davidoff explores the role of middle- and upper-class English women in formalising nineteenth-century Society. She concludes that these women played active roles in consolidating the elite by formulating and demanding adherence to strict codes of etiquette which helped to preserve and emphasise the differentiation between the classes. As the British empire gained in importance and nineteenth century English society became formalised, the idea that the British middle and upper classes formed the centre of the social world took on increased importance. Thus, "the domesticating of public life via the dictates of Society was combined with control of individual behaviour and face-to-face interaction through a rigidly applied code of personal behaviour." (p.33) As social and moral guardians, women used their powers of ostracism, ridicule, or exclusion to invoke societal sanctions against those individuals who did not conform to the norms. As more white women found their way to Red River Settlement in the 1840s, they established a social structure which reflected these beliefs and consolidated the elite by means of a combination of these social sanctions. With this in mind, the Foss-Ballenden scandal of 1850 can be seen as the triumph of the British social order on the fur trade. See also Hyam, pp. 95-108.

[47] The most recent examination of the Métis can be found in Gerhard J. Ens, "Kinship, Ethnicity, Class and the Red River Métis: The Parishes of St. Francois Xavier and St. Andrew's," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, 1989. For an older, but still useful discussion of the Métis, see Marcel Giraud, ***The Métis in the Canadian West,*** 2 vols., Translated by George Woodcock, (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1986).

society and regarded them with the same combination of suspicion, fear, and contempt that was reserved for the working class in England.[48]

By 1850, the Wrightsonian model of social order still held true for the fur trade as a whole. While class society was beginning to take shape at Red River, the pre-industrial household structure still acted as the foundation for Company posts, and contributing factors such as isolation and close personal contact perpetuated varying degrees of the old order, especially in outlying areas. However, rigidifying Victorian gender beliefs had left indelible marks on the social order of fur trade society. The acceptance and incorporation of middle-class Victorian ideas of femininity and masculinity established stricter boundaries of social acceptability for all individuals and were reflected in the increasing stratification between the classes and races after 1850.

In order to be able to appreciate an examination of Hargrave's letters, it is important to know something about Hargrave himself.[49] One of at least six surviving children, James Hargrave was born 19 November 1798 in Hawick Co., Scotland. His father was an estate manager and was persuaded to provide him with a good education by the parish minister who was impressed with his intelligence. Consequently, James alone of the family was sent to Fysshe's Academy in Galashiels, a middle-class institution,

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[48] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 956-7, J.D. Cameron to James Hargrave, Forks Red River, 1 February 1835; and NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1000, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 13 March 1835. News about mixed-blood problems at Red River travelled rapidly and concerned men throughout the Service. For a more detailed discussion of the Gentlemen's views of mixed-blood men, see Chapter 4.

[49] This biographical sketch is based on outlines provided by the HBCA Search File on James Hargrave; the ***DCB*** sketch written by Jennifer Brown and Sylvia Van Kirk in the ***Dictionary of Canadian Biography,*** Vol. IX, Francess Halpenny, ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 364-66; and the introduction to G.P. de T. Glazebrook's, ***The Hargrave Correspondence, 1821-1843,*** Facsimile ed., (Toronto: Greenwood Press for the Champlain Society, 1968), pp. xv-xix. Supplementary information comes directly from Hargrave's correspondence and will be footnoted separately.

where he attended school until age eighteen. After completing his education, he taught school before following his family to Canada in 1820. Turning his education to good use, he entered the employment of the North West Company as an apprentice clerk in 1820. After the amalgamation of the companies in 1821, he stayed on with the new Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk stationed at York Factory under the supervision of his friend and prominent ex-Nor'wester John George McTavish. Transferred to Red River in 1823, Hargrave spent the next four years[50] working happily under another ex-Nor'wester, Donald McKenzie. Returning to York Factory in 1826, he remained stationed there until 1851 when he was transferred to Sault Ste. Marie. Having impressed his superiors—including Governor George Simpson—with his business sense, organisation, and sound personal qualities, Hargrave was promoted to Chief Trader in 1833 and finally to Chief Factor in 1844. While in Scotland on furlough in 1837, he met and became engaged to John George McTavish's niece, Letitia. He returned to Scotland in 1839 and married Letitia on 8 January 1840. Unlike many other white women whose health could not stand up to fur trade conditions, Letitia remained with her husband at York Factory and bore him five children, three of which survived into adulthood. Tragedy struck the family at Sault Ste. Marie in 1854 when Letitia died suddenly of cholera and the youngest boy, Dugald, survived her by only several months. In 1856, Hargrave returned to York Factory to take over from his ailing brother-in-law William McTavish and remained there until he retired and travelled to Scotland in June 1859. While there, he married Margaret Alcock and they

[50] Hargrave returned to York Factory each summer during this period with the boat brigades.

returned to live on his property at Brockville, Canada West. He died there in 1865 and was buried next to Letitia.

While this brief outline of Hargrave's life indicates that it followed the same general pattern as most men's lives, it does not provide a feeling for the man. In many ways, James Hargrave was an atypical member of fur trade society. Although part of the fur trade for nearly forty years, Hargrave was not an Indian trader, did not speak any of the Indian languages, and never experienced the isolation of the small inland trading posts; in addition, he never took a country wife or formed a long-term relationship with any of the Indian or mixed-blood women. As a young man he shared the joys of Bachelor Hall with his colleagues and formed a number of lifelong friendships. As an adult, his situation at York Factory placed him in a unique position. Instead of being placed in charge of a small post or district, he acted as the efficient administrator and executive who used his considerable business and personnel skills to ensure the smooth operation of inland trade. Since York Factory was essential to the success of the Hudson's Bay Company, his work there was crucial. It is because of his posting to this central location that he met and corresponded with so many men across the fur trade.

James Hargrave was very much a middle-class Victorian gentleman in *mentalité*. Although a Borderer who emigrated before Victoria's reign, he shared many of the beliefs that have historically become grouped as Victorian. He was a firm believer in upward mobility and traced his success to hard work and an unblemished character. While not overly arrogant, he was a good judge of his own abilities and understood his worth to his

employers. He made this very clear when he wrote somewhat smugly to his mother in 1832:

> Indeed on looking around men in life I see few paths in which I could have hoped to succeed better.—My character I am proud to say is unstained, my services I know are of high value to the Company, I am loved & respected by all those who know me....[51]

Education was very important to Hargrave. Coming as he did from Scotland with its tradition of educational excellence and attributing his success in life to his superior education, it is not surprising that he believed that a good education was essential for men and women. His letters often mention his feelings of indebtedness to his parents for the education "I had no reason to expect from them."[52] Always a dutiful son, he sent his parents yearly gifts of money so that they could buy small luxuries for themselves.[53]

Politically a Whig,[54] Hargrave was a firm believer in men's ability to elevate themselves through work and self-help. Respectability, adherence to duty, and seriousness of character were of utmost importance to him. He accepted the Victorian definitions of masculinity and femininity wholeheartedly and attempted to foster gentlemanly behaviour wherever possible. He believed in setting goals and then working steadily to attain them.[55] He entered the fur trade with the idea of being able to save enough

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[51] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 7, James Hargrave to Jane Melrose, York Factory, 1 July 1832.

[52] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 4, James Hargrave to Rev'd. Wm. Rattray, York Factory, 29 August 1828.

[53] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 11, James Hargrave to Jane Melrose, York Factory, 16 July 1835.

[54] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 2183, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, (Norway House, 13 December 1841.

[55] By 1827, he was able to write to his parents that he expected to obtain a raise with his next engagement. He attributed this directly to the fact that he was well known in the Country and "respected by every one whose good opinion I value in it." NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to his parents, Ft. Garry, 29 January, 1827.

money to guarantee "a comfortable competency"[56] for old age. Consequently, he resolved to remain free of long-term country relationships which he felt drained men's revenues and caused them to either abandon their country families—"which no man of principle will even attempt"[57]—or bury themselves unhappily in the wilds when they really wished to retire to the civilised world.[58] Like many other middle-class men of the period, he postponed his own marriage until he had achieved a situation that he felt would allow him to support a family. He also made valiant attempts to persuade friends and acquaintances from forming country marriages and remained somewhat disdainful of many of the men who did not have enough strength of will to resist the temptation.[59]

Although very fond of his wife and family, his letters reflect the high value he placed on male friendship and a male support system. His letters show that he was a kind and genial, if at times a somewhat overly serious or slightly pedantic correspondent. Male friends were very important to him and throughout his life he retained many of the friends he made in the 1820s.[60] As a young man, he judged his colleagues carefully, staying on

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[56] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to Wm. Lockie, Red River, 3 January 1826. This is only one of many references to his concern for financial security in old age.

[57] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to his parents, Ft. Garry, 29 January, 1827. This aversion to country marriage runs as a theme throughout the first two decades of his correspondence.

[58] *Ibid.* The desire to gain "some sheltered and sunny corner" forms another theme in the correspondence.

[59] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 2, James Hargrave to Grant Forrest, York Factory, 20 July 1827.

[60] One of the few old friendships which Hargrave actually dropped is the one with Francis Heron. As an old friend of Heron's, Hargrave first tries to dissipate rumours about Heron's indiscretions, but when it becomes clear that Heron has abandoned his wife and children at Red River and run away with a chambermaid in London, he drops the connection. NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12. James Hargrave to George Simpson, York Factory, 26 July 1836; and NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12 James Hargrave to Charles Ross, Norway House, 27 June 1837.

good terms with those men he considered vain and frivolous, but choosing his friends from those he felt were 'worthy & good men'. Within this latter group, he was able to find friends "to whom I can open my mind in confidence,—strengthen good resolutions by mutual encouragement,—and take counsel from each other in our conduct and actions through life."[61] Whereas he had been mentored by men like John George McTavish and Donald McKenzie as a young man, as an older man he in turn mentored deserving young men like William McTavish and Archibald McKinlay who were just beginning to climb the ladder. His correspondence shows that his friendship was esteemed, his honesty valued, and his advice often heeded. The highest compliments he bestowed on other men centred on the traits of steadiness, carefulness, industriousness, and manliness—traits which he felt he possessed. Perhaps the best explanation of his success as a businessman, administrator, and friend came be traced to the philosophy that lay beneath this comment to his mother in July 1834, as he looked forward, somewhat apprehensively, to being in charge of York Factory for the first time:

> I will remain here another season, and in the absence of the excellent Gentleman under whom I have served so long, am placed in his room, to have the entire charge of York Factory & all the Coys Servants living here being one of the highest & most important situations in this Land.—I have much anxiety, on the Subject as the situation is new to me but if steadiness, & carefulness & a fine sense of what I felt from hard treatment when I was a poor Servant—will have any effect in aiding me to be a good Master I trust I will yet have some chance of succeeding.— ...I fear I will not be able to write you all this season, but tell my dear brothers & sisters that my love to them is warm as ever & that good fortune makes

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61 NAC MG19, A. 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 2, James Hargrave to Jane Melrose, York Factory, 1 November 1827.

no change in the affections of him who was once the poor Cow Herd—Jamie Hargrave.—[62]

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[62] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to Jane Melrose, York Factory, 26 July 1834.

CHAPTER 2

REDEFINING FEMININITY:

Male–Female Relationships Prior to 1821

As Gentlemen in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, James Hargrave and his correspondents were part of a group of men who held positions of power in the fur trade and helped redefine the fur trade social order in the first half of the nineteenth century. Connected to each other through a complex network of letters and personal contacts, they were part of a tightly-knit community of men who shared occupations, expectations, backgrounds, interests, values, and kin relationships. They occupied an hierarchical, male, commercial world where the affairs of the Company were expected to supersede personal concerns. However, they did not live in a vacuum. While these men often occupied isolated posts, they retained contact with their colleagues and their homelands through exhaustive personal correspondences. Nor were their lives solely structured by their connection with the Company. Social relationships could and did develop. While their letters show that male friendships and mentoring relationships were often perceived to be more important than male-female relationships, they also point out that women played an important, if at times peripheral, part in their lives. Snippets of gossip, allusions to family affairs, light-hearted badinage, moral advice, and philosophical discussions present a clear picture of these men's perceptions of women and male-female relationships.

Hargrave's correspondence shows that changing middle-class British gender beliefs were brought to the Country by young officers in the first

quarter of the nineteenth century. These ideas were disseminated through a male network of letters and personal contacts and the men's interpretations of these beliefs were reflected in their behaviour, which in turn reflected both the changing power base of fur trade society and their growing awareness of class. Finally, these gender beliefs were elemental in creating a new social order in fur trade society that redefined femininity and male-female relationships along nineteenth-century British lines.

Femininity and masculinity are never fixed and should not be examined in isolation from each other. Since gender operates within historical and cultural boundaries, gender roles are constantly open to re-interpretation and modification.[63] Power relationships are woven into the web of gender, just as gender helps to form the cloth out of which class is cut.

> Gender is never simply an arrangement in which the roles of men and women are decided in a contingent and haphazard way. At any given moment, gender will reflect the material interests of those who have power and those who do not. Masculinity, therefore, does not exist in isolation from femininity—it will always be an expression of the current image that men have of themselves in relation to women.[64]

With this in mind, it is important to remember that femininity is always defined within societal parameters. Since men have traditionally been the holders of power in western civilisation, historical definitions of femininity have largely been created by men and reflect their understanding of the changing requirements of their societies. Consequently, gender beliefs defining femininity have been modified whenever it has been in the best interests of the group in power. While this appears to place men in a

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[63] Arthur Brittan, ***Masculinity and Power,*** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 1. See also Lipman-Blumen, p. 3.

[64] ***Idem.***, p. 3.

conspiratorial role, it must not be presumed that it was an active conspiracy. Changes such as these generally occur at a subconscious level over a period of time and are imperceptibly translated into the fabric of gender which forms the infrastructure of the society.

Nineteenth century attitudes towards women were not unique;[65] they bore the imprint of preceding centuries and were rooted in the structures of western civilisation—Greek philosophy, Roman law, and Judeo-Christian theology. The greater freedom and higher social standing that had been granted women in the Anglo-Saxon period do not appear to have left any significant impression on the position of women in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain. While Alan Macfarlane's work indicates that medieval English women had significantly more rights and privileges in private law, if not in public law, than historians have previously believed, these advantages disappeared somewhere between the fifteenth and late eighteenth centuries. This shift in gender beliefs bears further research and could present some interesting insights into the changing nature of English society during this period; however, it is far beyond the scope of this work. Therefore, when examining the status of British women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the previously-mentioned traditional foundation stones of western civilisation appear to be more applicable than

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[65] Susan Stuard, "The Dominion of Gender: Women's Fortunes in the High Middle Ages," in ***Becoming Visible***, 2nd ed., Renate Bridenthal, ***et. al.***, eds., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 153-172; Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, ***A History of Their Own***, vol. 1, (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 24-264 and "The Legacies of Renaissance Humanism and the Scientific Revolution," in ***A History of Their Own***, vol. 2, (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 83-99. See also Alan Macfarlane, ***The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property and Social Transition***, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp. 131-135.

the remnants of a Germanic heritage that Macfarlane discovered in his research.

Greek philosophy, Roman law, and Judeo-Christian theology are all systems which assigned qualities to the sexes according to perceived sexual differences and resulted in the establishment of hierarchical systems of power in which men held the key positions. Each of these structures was predicated on the definition of men's and women's natures as polar opposites. Men were believed to be the creators of civilisation: analytical, logical, physically perfect, powerful, and inherently superior to women in all ways. On the other hand, women were associated with the chaos and danger of nature, and presumed to be emotional, irrational, and intrinsically inferior. Women's biological differences were interpreted as natural flaws which not only highlighted their innate inferiority but also rendered them insatiably sexual. Paradoxically, these systems also interpreted male sexuality as double-edged; it was considered both more limited and fragile than female sexuality and yet more uncontrollable and more bestial when loosed. Since men were presumed to be the creators and guardians of civilisation and female sexuality was the temptation which could drag men down to the level of animals (and thus threaten civilisation itself) female sexuality had to be strictly controlled for the good of the entire society.

The new definition of femininity in the nineteenth century was based on changes to the female gender role which had occurred in the eighteenth century.[66] These changes took place against a backdrop of religious fervour

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[66] Marlene LeGates, "The Cult of Womanhood in Eighteenth-Century Thought," ***Eighteenth-Century Studies***, vol. 10, no. 1 (Fall, 1976): 21-39. See also John Dwyer, "'A Peculiar Aptitude to Please': Complacent Women and Scottish Moralists," ***Virtuous Discourse***, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), pp. 117-140; Bridget Hill, ***Eighteenth Century Women: An Anthology***, (London: Allen Unwin, 1987); and Barbara B. Schnorrenberg with Jean Hunter, "The Eighteenth Century Englishwoman," in ***The Women of England***

fervour as well as intellectual, economic, political, and social reforms,[67] all of which contributed to a growing sense of anomie and created an increasingly conservative reaction from the groups in power. As increased industrial, agricultural, and mercantile wealth changed Britain's economic base, rapid population growth and urbanisation altered the demographic structure of the country. In turn, these changes were accentuated by the evolution of a class society which was beginning to challenge traditional political and social institutions. Since the debate on the 'woman question' grew out of the middle class and reflected its desire to be separate from the 'vice-ridden' masses,[68] it is not surprising that the female gender role which emerged was middle class in nature and affected the women of the upper and middle classes the most.

The redefinition of female gender roles in the second half of the occurred largely as a result of the Enlightenment. Debates on the nature of women and their position in society have occupied moralists and theologians throughout history. Groups of men in power positions have often examined and redefined femininity according to the current needs of the power group. During the Enlightenment, many of the leading philosophers, moralists, and theologians from England, Scotland,[69] and France were involved in a

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From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present, Barbara Kanner, ed., (Hamden: Archon, 1979), pp. 183-228.

67 Schnorrenberg, pp. 199-204.

68 Marlene LeGates, "The Cult of Womanhood in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 10 (Fall 1976): 25, 38; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, & Society*, 2nd ed., (New York: Longman, 1989), pp. 19-32. Weeks takes a more Whiggish approach to the topic by attributing the changes in Victorian sexuality to the rise of a evangelically-inspired middle class that simultaneously attacked the immorality of the upper and lower classes.

69 Scotland provided some of the debate's most outstanding participants. Such well-known eighteenth-century writers as James Fordyce, Dr. John Gregory, Vicesimus Knox, Mrs. Griffiths, John Bennett, and Richard Steele all contributed largely to the debate. The Scottish contribution is especially significant when examining the implementation of the new definition of femininity in fur trade society, because the men who held the key power

debate on the 'woman question'—a debate in which they finally resolved the perennial question of women's essentially good or evil nature, as well as their place in society.[70] After extensive debate which was heavily influenced by humanism, it was decided that women were exceptionally good by nature, as long as their sexuality was strictly controlled and they remained subordinate to men. By refuting the traditional beliefs in women's connections with disorder, as well as their intellectual and spiritual inferiority, eighteenth-century moralists provided a new, and in some ways more positive, definition of femininity. In this new interpretation of gender, women were associated with order rather than disorder and were also deemed to be men's intellectual and spiritual equals. However, this new outlook did not negate the traditional belief in female physical inferiority due to women's biological differences. Even so, the Enlightenment established the first ir ortant shift in the traditional gender beliefs.[71] While these new aspects of femininity were reflected in an increased demand for better female education, they did not significantly alter the perception of women's roles or potentials. Women were to be better educated so that they could better fill their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Women who did not marry were still pitied and blamed for their failure as women, and once married, they

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positions in the fur trade were Scots who grew up during or after the debate and had been influenced by the pervasive changes which resulted from the resolution of the debate.

[70] Anderson and Zinsser, "Humanism," in ***A History***, vol. 2, pp. 83-99. The debate on the woman question—the *querelles des femmes* as it was known in France—occupied scholars across Europe for nearly three hundred years. Throughout the majority of this period, women had largely been portrayed as evil by nature and endowed with all of the traditional negative female characteristics: "vile, inconstant, cowardly, fragile, obstinate, venomous,...imprudent, cunning,...incorrigible, easily upset, full of hatred, always talking, incapable of keeping a secret, insincere, frivolous, and sexually insatiable" (as quoted on p. 92). The outcome of the debate during the Enlightenment provided a more positive view of women's nature if not a broader gender role, and laid the groundwork for changes which would take place in the late nineteenth century.

[71] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Women and the Enlightenment," in ***Becoming Visible***, Bridenthal, *et al.*, eds., pp. 251-277.

were expected to bear children and devote their lives to creating pleasant and moral homes for their husbands and children.

While the Enlightenment promoted increased individualism for men, its equation of female goodness with sexual control and subordination reinforced traditional belief in the necessity of the submission of women. In a society that was being rapidly altered in many ways, Enlightenment authors were haunted by the spectre of social disorder and fears of imminent societal collapse. While increased wealth, social, and economic opportunities were not viewed as evils in themselves, they were understood to foster luxury and breed vice. The new cities were also feared as possible hotbeds of disorder and vice because they were too large for the traditional social controls to be effective. The events surrounding the French Revolution at the end of the increased British fears of revolution and revitalised concerns about the imminent disintegration of contemporary society. These beliefs created a reactionary backlash in Britain which made all attempts at social change suspect. The traditional belief that women must be kept in their proper sphere and sexually controlled was strengthened by counter-revolutionary fears in an effort to protect British society from the forces of disorder.[72] As a result, the answer to social order lay in controlling women's sexuality and ensuring that women fulfilled their 'proper' roles as wives and mothers. By re-evaluating the need for the traditional restraints imposed on women, these writers emerged with a model that defined femininity through chastity, submission, and motherhood. These gender beliefs were translated into

[72] Since the relationship between men and women was understood to be natural and God-ordained, forming the basis of all other social relationships, any alteration to this natural order could be expected to cause societal instability. By this logic, in order to guarantee societal order the natural foundation of all relationships—the relationship between men and women—had to be maintained unaltered.

gender roles that restricted female sexuality by limiting women's activities and autonomy. It was believed that women had to be placed under continuous male domination for their own good and for the good of the society. The patriarchal nature of the society compounded the need for curbing female sexual opportunity by linking it to the importance of family and legitimate inheritance. Consequently, the new female gender role still saw women's biological functions and their characters inextricably intwined. Biological determinism was combined with female moral inferiority in an equation which resulted in the development of separate and stricter moral codes for women than for men.

While the new gender role gave men and women intellectual equality, it also reinforced the traditional polarities and inequalities between men and women. The most significant change in the new definition of femininity was found in the elevation of chastity. The increased emphasis on female chastity did not imply that gender belief which defined women as sexual beings had been substantially altered. Women were still understood to be ruled by the lustful cravings of their wombs which made them fundamentally unchaste and easily corrupted. Consequently, women could only achieve chastity by superseding nature.[73] Previous centuries had emphasised women's predilection for sexual incontinence and their threat to the fabric of society; the new definition of femininity revolved around the image of female chastity as one of the fundamental supports of society.[74] Sexual purity

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[73] Early medical teachings did not expect men to be chaste, but men were presumed to have ways of controlling their sexual urges, including work, alcohol, will-power, or sex itself. Women, however, were presumed to be at the mercy of their wombs. LeGates, p. 22.

[74] LeGates sees this change resulting from the increased stratification of the classes in the late eighteenth century. In her view, the cult of the virtuous woman arose as a new response to the old fear of female sexuality. Female chastity supported the patriarchal institutions of the family and the social order and acted as a social signifier for the middle class. Carol Christ sees the creation of the 'angel' image for women stemming partially from a reaction to

dominated middle-class perceptions of women and by the middle of the nineteenth century, chastity was the ultimate virtue of the 'true' or 'womanly' woman.[75] Achieving and maintaining chastity was understood to take remarkable and constant vigilance on the part of women and their guardians, as women's moral frailty could only be translated into moral superiority if they occupied their 'proper' domestic sphere, where they were protected from vicious outside influences. Chastity allowed 'pure' women to be elevated to the ranks of angels or goddesses; obversely, it also meant that women who were not 'pure' were 'fallen angels.' In other words, they were not really women, but veritable devils in disguise.

As middle-class women's chastity came to be viewed as a key signifier of social class, middle-class men who sought extra-marital sex were forced to turn to working-class women. In doing so, these men employed a perception of gender which linked unbridled sexuality and sexual availability with working-class women.[76] As sexual beings, these women were considered

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the increasingly impersonal, vulgar, and amoral world of the marketplace. This tendency to look backwards was compounded by a fear of domination by the masses, which in turn led to increased identification with the gentry and the courtly ideal of reverence for women. However, she also argues that the conception of the 'angel' was more directly the result of a growing fear of both female and male sexuality. Active female sexuality posed a threat to civilisation as only women's sexual passivity and purity were believed to control male sexuality and prevent men from descending to their natural bestiality. The innately animalistic and aggressive nature of male sexuality was thus ambivalently regarded, if not actively feared. LeGates, pp. 26-27. See also Katharine M. Rogers, "The Situation of Women," in ***Feminism In Eighteenth-Century England***, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 9; and Carol Christ, "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House," in ***A Widening Sphere***, Martha Vicinus, ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 146-162.

[75] Weeks, p. 29. See also Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," in ***Dimity Convictions***, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 24-28; Thomas, pp. 195-215; and Leonore Davidoff, "Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England," in ***Journal of Social History***, vol. 7 no. 4 (Summer 1974): 413-414.

[76] As a contemporary, W. R. Greg's comment on the masses is indicative of the middle class train of thought: "fit only for sleep and sensual indulgence," in Weeks, p. 28. See also Christopher Smout, "Aspects of Sexual Behaviour in Nineteenth Century Scotland," in ***Bastardy and Its Comparative History***, Peter Laslett, *et al.*, eds., (London: Edward Arnold, 1980), p. 194; Thomas, pp. 197-199; and Hill, pp. 10-11.

immoral and disreputable. However, these beliefs did not prevent married or unmarried middle-class men from keeping working-class women as mistresses. While this practice was certainly not approved by the Church, it was societally condoned. Men who tired of their mistresses usually cast them off, but some made provisions to maintain them and their children.[77] This understanding of working-class female sexuality and the well-established practice of mistress keeping was brought to fur trade society by young British officers in the first half of the nineteenth century and were rapidly applied to the detriment of native and mixed-blood women, as well as the institution of country marriage.

Restraint, modesty, submission, compliance, and piety were all combined with chastity in the creation of new gender role for middle-class women in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[78] The fundamental dependence of the female gender role with respect to various male power groups was reflected in British scientific, religious, educational, legal, and political doctrines. Doctors espoused the belief that women were ruled by their biological functions and that these functions were in themselves diseased states which made women psychologically unstable and morally susceptible;[79] the Church elevated the concept of religious marriage and adhered strictly to the Pauline notion of women's complete subordination to men, especially their husbands; education followed the

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[77] Smout, p. 194.

[78] Hill, pp. 16-23. See also Welter, pp. 21-41. Welter's text deals with the redefinition of femininity in nineteenth-century America, but the four key attributes of True Womanhood that she identifies—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity—are also applicable in nineteenth-century Britain.

[79] Dolores Peters, "Pregnant Pamela: Characterization and Popular Medical Attitudes in the Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 14 no. 2 (Summer, 1981): 435-441. See also Weeks, pp. 40, 42-43.

Rousseauian model which prepared middle-class women for their roles as attractive companions by supplying them with superficial knowledge and a smattering of inconsequential, yet tasking 'accomplishments'—without ever taxing their 'limited' intellects;[80] and political and legal decision-making power were denied females for "under the law married women were classed together with criminals, lunatics, and minors—legally incompetent and irresponsible."[81]

Before moving on to an examination of the way that these beliefs were reflected in Hargrave's correspondence and in the social order of the fur trade, it is important to become familiar with the gender roles which defined femininity and male-female relationships during the survival period of the Company, prior to its amalgamation with the North West Company in 1821.[82]

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[80] Welter, p. 28. See also Kristina Straub, "Women's Pastimes and the Ambiguity of Female Self-Identification in Fanny Burney's *Evelina*," ***Eighteenth Century Life***, vol. X n.s. 2 (May, 1986): 58-72.

[81] Lee Holcombe, "Victorian Wives and Property," in *A Widening Sphere*, Martha Vicinus, ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 7.

[82] In doing so, it is especially important to note the contributions of two eminent scholars, Jennifer Brown and Sylvia Van Kirk, in whose works this thesis found its inspiration. Both Brown and Van Kirk have studied the changing social structure of the fur trade with reference to women. Brown, an historical anthropologist, has examined topics which range from the importance of linguistics for fur trade scholars to an in-depth comparative study of the social and domestic relations of North West and Hudson's Bay Company employees. Most significantly for the purposes of this study, she is the only scholar who has concentrated solely on the Hargrave Correspondence as a means of exploring the concepts of fur trade marriage and domesticity. Van Kirk, on the other hand, has taken a feminist and nativist stance in her historical analyses of the fur trade. Although the Hargrave Correspondence also played an important role in her work, she has concentrated on the significant and previously unrecognised socio-economic contributions of native women in the early fur trade, the development and devolution of the social institution of country marriage, and the impact of the fur trade upon Indian women. Both agree that pre-Victorian and Victorian attitudes towards women were introduced to fur trade society by Hudson's Bay Company employees and that they became more common in the Country after 1821; however, neither of them go much beyond this initial premise to explore the underlying reasons for the changes that ensued. They emphasise the cumulative effects of amalgamation of the Companies, introduction of increasingly middle-class officers, expedition of travel and communication with Britain, expansion of white settlement, and amplification of religious zeal all played substantial parts in redefining the social order of the fur trade by the middle of the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding the validity of these factors, changing gender

Isolated in a frontier society, British men were involved with Indian and later mixed-blood women from the earliest days of the fur trade. Native women provided the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company with sexual outlets, companionship, and vital trading alliances. They also made important economic contributions to the success of the trade.[83] In a world where even the survival techniques differed from those in Britain, the early Hudson's Bay Company employees were at a numerical disadvantage and had to accept the Indians as a powerful entity. Prior to 1821, frontier conditions precluded simply transferring British customs and models to the new society; consequently, Company Gentlemen accepted or adapted those Indian ways of life which were least foreign to them. Since survival and economic success were of foremost importance in this period of expansion and competition, these British men were left with little opportunity to implement the cultural and social structures of their homeland. The presence of Indians as a power of consequence was reflected in the modification of the British definition of femininity to reflect Indian beliefs, as well as in the

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beliefs and gender roles played as important a part. They often lay behind the changes. By using gender as a perspective to shed light on these changes, it becomes clear that British gender beliefs have consistently played a strong role in defining femininity and formulating male-female relationships in fur trade society. For further information, see Jennifer Brown, "Company Men and Native Families: Fur Trade Social and Domestic Relations in Canada's Old Northwest," (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1976); ***Strangers In Blood***, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985); "Changing Views of Fur-Trade Marriage and Domesticity: James Hargrave, his Colleagues, and the Sex," in ***Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology***, Patricia A. McCormack, ed., vol. 6 no. 3 (1976): 92-105; "Linguistic Solitudes and Changing Social Categories," in Carol M. Judd, and Arthur J. Ray, eds., ***Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference***, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 147-159;.Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Women in the Fur Trade Society of the Canadian West," Doctoral Dissertation, (Queen Mary College, University of London, 197; ***Many Tender Ties***, (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980); "'The Custom of the Country': An Examination of Fur Trade Marriage Practices," in ***Essays on Western History***, Lewis H. Thomas, ed., (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), pp. 49-68; "Thanadelthur," ***The Beaver***, (Spring 1974): 40-45; "Towards A Feminist Perspective in Native History," in ***Papers of the Eighteenth Algonkian Conference***, William Cowan, ed., (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1987), pp. 377-387.

[83] Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, pp. 23-73.

acceptance of the institution of country marriage, which combined Indian and rural British beliefs.

Although very little attention has been addressed to a comparative study of Indian and British gender beliefs, a brief examination of eighteenth-century fur trade documents indicates that male-female relationships may have been facilitated by similarities in gender beliefs. In both societies women were defined as subordinate to men. The extent of the subjugation of Indian women often amazed British men. Nor'Wester John Long, writing in the last half of the eighteenth century, remarked that an Indian wife was "an obsequious slave" to her husband who "is seldom known to take any more notice of her than of the most indifferent person...."[84] This opinion was echoed by Long's contemporary, Hudson's Bay employee Samuel Hearne. Hearne felt that the lot of Indian women was "one continued scene of drudgery" in which women performed the majority of the laborious duties of the household:

> carrying and hauling heavy loads, dressing skins for clothing, curing their provisions, and practicing other necessary domestic duties which are required in a family, without enjoying the least diversion of any kind, or relaxation, on any occasion whatever; and except in the execution of those homely duties, in which they are always instructed from their infancy, their senses seem almost as dull and frigid as the zone they inhabit.[85]

While Indian women may have been exposed to harsher treatment and expected to have more physical strength than the majority of British women, both Indian and British men perceived women's role to be that of wife and

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[84] John Long, ***Voyages and Travels in the Years 1768-1788***, Milo Milton Quaife, ed., (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly & Sons Co., 1920), p. 172. See also, Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, pp. 17-18.

[85] Samuel Hearne, ***A Journey From Prince of Wales Fort in Hudson's Bay to The Northern Ocean***, Introduction by L.H. Neatby, (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1971), p. 336.

mother. British men could find no fault with Indian women as mothers, believing that "it will not be disputed that the Indian women love their children with as much affection as parents in the most civilised states can boast."[86] Nor was the sexual division of labour greatly different. While the household tasks differed in Rupert's Land, the division of labour by sex was recognised by both Indian and British men and reflected the belief that women's work was household work. Chief Factor Andrew Graham's discussion of Indian women's activities in the second half of the eighteenth century shows how neatly the British gender belief of sexually differentiated spheres of activity could be transferred to the new setting: "when they are not travelling, their employment is chiefly in making ornaments for the clothing of themselves, their husbands, children, and other relations or friends;...they are, in their sphere, as indefatigable as the men."[87]

However, British and Indian opinions differed as to the importance of women's chastity. While the officers acknowledged that different tribes had different sexual standards, British gender beliefs about women's sexuality were generally applied to judge Indian women's sexual behaviour. The officers modified the British definition of femininity to accept Indian standards of female beauty, physical strength, and designated female activities, but not chastity. Consequently, James Isham believed that Indian women's sexual freedom made them "Lud' from their cradle."[88] On the other hand, Samuel Hearne approved of the care taken to preserve the chastity of Northern Indian girls, feeling that it was so unremitting that it "cannot be

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[86] Long, p. 78.

[87] Glyndwr Williams, ed., ***Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-91***, vol. xxvii, (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1969), p. 144.

[88] E.E. Rich, ed., ***James Isham's Observations on Hudsons Bay, 1743***, vol. 012, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1949), p. 80.

exceeded by the most rigid discipline of an English-boarding school."[89] In spite of these gentlemen's interest in female chastity, it had not yet been elevated to the position of dominance that it would hold in the nineteenth century, nor had class stratification in Britain developed sufficiently to make sexual respectability one of the prime signifiers of middle-class membership. Thus, the men who became chief factors in the eighteenth-century Hudson's Bay Company were not always as removed from the lower orders with their more lenient interpretations of female sexuality and male-female relationships as their counterparts in the nineteenth century.[90]

The development of the institution of country marriage (marriage *à la façon du pays*) is indicative of the common ground between British and Indian institutions prior to 1821 and reflects the important role played by Indians in the formation of early fur trade society. Indian women were essential to the survival and success of early traders[91] and the institution of country

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89 Hearne, p. 311.

90 Rosalind K. Marshall, ***Virgins and Viragos: The History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980***, (London: Collins, 1983), p. 274. See also Smout. Marshall notes that eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Scotland differed from England by recognising marriages which did not have either official civil or religious sanctification and by granting divorces to both men and women on the grounds of adultery or desertion. Rural Scottish women also retained a greater degree of sexual and economic autonomy than their urban counterparts. In examining sexual behaviour in nineteenth-century Scotland, Christopher Smout indicates that Scottish pre-industrial society did not appear to fear the consequences of female sexuality as much as English society. The relative freedom of Scottish women is perhaps best highlighted by Scottish acceptance of pre-marital sexual behaviour. Rural Scottish women enjoyed more sexual freedom prior to marriage than urban English women and did not have to bear the shameful stigma applied to 'fallen' woman if they became pregnant. Smout's analysis shows a high percentage of illegitimate births in rural areas (up to 14-16% of the total births in Banffshire) suggests that courtship patterns commonly accepted pre-marital sex, pregnancy, and cohabitation prior to marriage. Working-class attitudes towards pre-marital pregnancy in nineteenth-century rural Scotland were pragmatic rather than melodramatic: "Puir thing, it's a misfortune, but she'll get ower it" (as quoted in Smout, p. 206). This behaviour was a far cry from the middle-class belief that a woman who had lost her chastity was no better than a common prostitute. In fact, in eighteenth-century Lewis, "it was even said that the peasant girls reckoned it an honour to have a daughter by a gentleman as it made them more sought in marriage by their own class afterwards" (as quoted in Smout, p. 206).

91 Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, pp. 28-73.

marriage reflected their importance as British behavioural sanctions were modified to accept a social structure based on predominantly Indian traditions.[92] In the eighteenth century, country marriages developed under the encouragement of the Indians and followed Indian views of marriage as alliances which strengthened trade ties. These unions were not subject to religious or civil ceremonies and were understood to be temporary by both parties. When Gentlemen tired of their country wives or left the Country, the women either returned to their lands with their children or became the country wives of other Company employees. When these possibilities did not exist, the women and their families often remained at or near a post and depended on the Company for support.[93] Although country marriage developed from the Indian view of male-female relationships and did not coincide with the growing belief in Britain that religiously-sanctified, lifelong marriage was one of the fundamental buttresses of society, the officers adapted to the Indian notions and accepted wives under these

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[92] John E. Foster, "The Origins of the Mixed Bloods in the Canadian West," in ***Essays on Western History***, Lewis H. Thomas, ed., (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), p. 73. See also Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***; " 'The Custom of the Country,' " in ***Essays***, pp. 49-68; "Towards a Feminist Perspective," in ***Papers***, pp. 377-387; "Women and the Fur Trade," pp. 4-21; and Smout, p. 194. In spite of Foster's and Van Kirk's assertions, the country marriage was not an entirely new phenomenon for eighteenth-century men. It coincided neatly with pre-industrial informal marriages and mistress keeping, especially in Scotland. The process of keeping a country wife and then turning her off to a fellow trader was not unknown for men who were familiar with the actions of gentlemen like eighteenth-century Lord Crawford:

> Lord Crawford had a highland lass or mistress, a bonnie nymph, from Arran. Auld Auchinhane reported my Lord bairned her and [being tired of her] he garred Willie Orr, his servant to kipple with her, and take the wyte of his lordship's wane. Therefore Lord Crawford set Willie up as a farmer...and tochered Jean, the issue of his amour. (as quoted in Smout, p. 194)

Crawford's acceptance of his responsibility for the woman and child is shown by arranging the woman's respectable marriage and by providing a dowry for his daughter. This durability of this process is shown in the Indian Country in the 1830s. Governor George Simpson made similar arrangements for the marriage of John George McTavish's country wife Nancy McKenzie after McTavish married a white wife and brought her back to the Country.

[93] Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, pp. 28-52.

limitations. While country wives were expected to be chaste and display many of the other ideal female character traits, their British husbands were forced to modify their views of female physical strength as well as their concepts of women's proper sphere in order to meet the realities of life in the fur trade. Country wives often played physically active and economically important roles in the male or public sphere. Thus, in accepting country wives, officers accepted not only a different concept of marriage, but also modified their definition of femininity. However, as in all transactions, both parties contributed to the final result. Consequently, country wives followed British custom and took their husbands' names; in return, they were treated as legitimate wives, not as mistresses.[94] While similarities between Indian and British perceptions of femininity were undoubtedly important in aiding the development of country marriage, other factors may also have been significant. The need to cement trading relationships with the Indians and the exigency of gaining the economic services of Indian women in ensuring the success of the commercial enterprise may have combined with the knowledge that country marriages were necessarily temporary to encourage Gentlemen in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to accept the institution of country marriage on largely Indian terms.

Prior to the commencement of the Hargrave Correspondence in 1823, it was normal for Gentlemen in the fur trade to be involved in relationships with Indian or mixed-blood women. These Gentlemen brought British gender beliefs with them to the fur trade. Although these beliefs were not identical to the belief systems held by the Indians with whom they were required to cement relationships, there were enough similarities between the

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[94] *Idem.*, p. 51.

two models to allow Indian women to be judged positively and be seen as appropriate marital choices for Gentlemen. The absence of class sentiments and the importance of Indians in the Company's continued success resulted in the modification of these British gender beliefs and the acceptance of Indian based definitions of male-female relationships.

CHAPTER 3

CHASTITY AND CHANGE:

British Middle-Class Gender Beliefs in the Fur Trade

By 1823, when James Hargrave's correspondence begins, the Hudson's Bay Company was rapidly moving into a new era. Amalgamation had assured the Company's survival and Governor Simpson's policies had streamlined, consolidated, and modernised the new concern.[95] Economically, the Company was beginning to recover from the strains of intense competition. Socially, the Company was also changing. As the adaptations of the survival period were no longer as necessary, energy was devoted to building a strong, recognisable social order that embodied the social and cultural mores of Britain. This process was aided by closer ties with Britain as a result of improved transportation and communications systems. The drive for closer ties with Britain had been strengthened in 1821 by the influx of fifteen Scottish ex-Nor'Westers as chief factors. This expanded the Scottish presence in positions of power to a total of nineteen factorships out of a maximum of twenty-five.[96] More significantly, the appointment of Governor George Simpson personified the changing Company. An upwardly-mobile, illegitimate son, Simpson's Scottish background and class-conscious middle-class beliefs aligned him with the ex-Nor'Westers.[97] Pragmatic, shrewd, and energetic, he was the consummate businessman. As the most prominent carrier of nineteenth-century gender beliefs in the

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[95] John S. Galbraith, ***The Little Emperor***, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 63.

[96] Brown, ***Strangers***, p. 112.

[97] ***Idem.***, pp. 115-123. See also Galbraith and Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***.

Country, Simpson's attitudes towards male-female and male-male relationships influenced the development of the new social order.

In addition to Simpson, young men like James Hargrave, who joined the Hudson's Bay Company at or after the merger, reflected the changes which were affecting nineteenth-century Britain. Better educated, more class conscious, and less isolated than their predecessors, they viewed their sojourn with the Company as a means to an improved social and economic position in the civilised world.[98] Consequently, there was less pressure on them to adapt their beliefs to fit the Country, and more chance of their modifying the system to fit their beliefs. The letters are largely reflective of the views of the increasingly important Scottish element in the Hudson's Bay Company, as Hargrave's regular correspondents were predominantly Highland Scots and Hargrave himself was a Borderer.[99] In terms of age, the correspondents ranged nearly forty years, with Hargrave who had been born near the turn of the nineteenth century, at the centre of the group. While this demographic information was a contributing factor in determining the correspondents' definitions of femininity and their boundaries of acceptable female behaviour, these factors did not play as significant a role as the underlying framework of gender that they brought with them to the Country.

References to women are found throughout the Correspondence, reaching their peak in the 1830s and falling off throughout the 1840s. Throughout this period, the references also change in kind. Philosophical discussions about the perceived positive and negative effects of male-female

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[98] Brown, "Changing Views," p. 99.

[99] Hargrave's and his colleagues' Scottish origins were not unusual. See Jennifer Brown for a detailed breakdown of the origins of Hudson's Bay Company personnel post-1821. Jennifer S.H. Brown, ***Strangers in Blood***, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), pp. 111-115.

relationships are interwoven with sly hints and frank exchanges between the young men in the 1820s. Rapidly changing social structures are reflected in the gossip- and scandal-laden letters of the 1830s.[100] During this decade, domestic affairs also appear and begin to rearrange the priorities for many of Hargrave's correspondents. By the 1840s, Hargrave and the majority of his contemporaries are middle-aged and in positions of responsibility and power; consequently, it is not surprising that references to women become scarce and are often limited to mention of domestic affairs or choice pieces of gossip.

At the beginning of the Correspondence, some effects of the rigidifying gender beliefs and the gradually changing power structure of fur trade society were already beginning to be felt. Although country marriage was still the norm in the 1820s, it had already reached its apogee and was beginning its decline. Gentlemen's choice of country wives had changed and Indian women had largely been replaced by mixed-blood women. As Van Kirk has pointed out, these women were more desirable for a number of reasons. Physically, they were more compatible with European standards of beauty; socially, they were better educated and more like British women in their manner; furthermore, they were often the daughters of high-ranking Gentleman and important fur trade families. As a result, taking a mixed-blood woman for a country wife often guaranteed a young officer an appealing partner who shared at least part of his cultural background and whose position in fur trade society could be used to establish structures of patronage and clientage which would eventually lead to his advancement in

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100 Hyam, "Empire and Sexual Opportunity," p. 62. According to Hyam, discretion was important for men in sexual interactions in all colonial societies because of the prevalence of gossip. In such small societies, deviating from the accepted behavioural norms could result in social ostracism and permanently damage a man's chance of promotion or success.

the trade. This transition from Indian to mixed-blood wives also reflected the gradual deterioration of Indian power in fur trade society.[101] Country marriage was no longer important as a means of establishing key trading and personal alliances with the Indians in all but the most remote reaches of the trade;[102] rather, it reflected the emergence of a white power structure in fur trade society. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, young men who wished to create the necessary alliances and relationships for success had to look for the approval of their fellow officers, not the surrounding Indian tribes. As the ethnicity of country wives changed, other factors also crept into the relationships to reveal fur trade society's move away from Indian structures and towards British beliefs and institutions. The most significant of these factors included the increasing permanence of country marriages, the development of specific forms of community celebration which granted public recognition of country marriages, and after 1821, the

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101 For a good analysis of the interconnections between race, sex, and empire see Hyam, ***Empire and Sexuality***, pp. 200-217. Hyam notes that British attitudes towards all colonial peoples deteriorated after the middle of the eighteenth century. According to Hyam, in the mid-eighteenth century the British possessed little colour prejudice, believed in the "essential homogeneity of mankind as a whole" (p. 200), and still had some belief in the concept of the 'noble savage.' These attitudes disappeared through the dwindling of *respect* between 1790 and 1840 and finally through the erosion of sympathy and the growth of prejudice which took place in the mid-1850s to 1860s. This disillusionment with colonial peoples grew in proportion to the British experience of trying to govern, convert, or trade with them. As the British men in power positions became increasingly disillusioned with trying to 'improve' their charges, they tended to see these societies in increasingly negative terms and devalued the people and their abilities. The capacity of native peoples was increasingly questioned and a growing demand for 'social distance' between the rulers and the ruled was evinced. Not surprisingly, the pattern of intermarriage between British and colonial peoples reflects these changes. During the initial stages of contact, intermarriage was high in all locations; however, as racist attitudes grew, racial intermarriage ceased although interracial sex often continued.

102 In spite of George Simpson's aversion to Indians, he encouraged marital alliances between Hudson's Bay Company employees and Indian women in the more remote areas of the fur trade, noting that the Company needed to create a body of half-breeds which would have family ties to bind them to the interest of the Company. Rich, ed., "Report on Athabaska District," ***Simpson's Athabaska Journal***, fo. 27, May 18, 1821, pp. 395-6.

formalisation of the institution through the establishment of Company-created civil marriage contracts.[103]

James Hargrave and his correspondents were aware of the changes that were affecting male-female relationships in fur trade society, but rather than modify their beliefs to fit the old structure, they maintained their middle-class nineteenth-century gender beliefs and used them to define femininity for all women in fur trade society. While gender, class, and ethnicity are all factors which are present in the Correspondence, gender appears to have been more significant than the other factors, as the correspondents' opinions were based more on the way that women fit into their preconceived gender roles than on their ethnicity or class. Consequently, women who were physically attractive, virtuous, and accomplished met these gender requirements and found approval; those who did not were generally disparaged and relegated to an inferior position as the men became increasingly more conscious of class and their position in society. As sisters, mothers, lovers, or wives, the women mentioned in these letters are almost all considered as adjuncts to men. Even the mixed-blood woman Mary Taylor, whose story will be discussed later, is only treated as an independent actor after a long ordeal during which her unwavering exemplification of positive female traits won the approval of men such as George Simpson and James Hargrave.

As both a positive and negative force, physical beauty has always been an important component of femininity and a fundamental ingredient in male-female relationships. As a positive force, it has been historically associated with virtue, as well as other amiable and sympathetic female

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103 Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, pp. 95-144; Hyam, ***Empire and Sexuality***, p. 96. From 1836 onward all Chief Factors who were also Justices of the Peace could conduct marriages; after 1845, this privilege was extended to all Chief Traders.

character traits. Obversely, it has also been affiliated with the negative aspect of female sexuality—its power to lure virtuous and unsuspecting men away from their duty and towards destruction. Hargrave's correspondence reflects this divergence.

While early fur trade writers were split as to the physical beauty of Indian women, the fact that they receive next to no positive notice in these letters makes a statement in their absence. More often than not, Indian women are viewed negatively. In 1833, when Hargrave speculated to his brother Andrew on his matrimonial chances with certain ladies of their acquaintance, he feared that "the pestilent smell of the squaw and the brush hut"[104] would ruin his chances. This association of Indian women with smoke, dirt, and noxious odours is indicative of the growing division between the two cultures during the period. A rare and somewhat ambiguous reference to their physical appearance as "brown berries that are there so kind & so willing"[105] refers more to their sexual availability than to their physical beauty.

However, the situation of mixed-blood women is more complex. While Van Kirk has pointed out how the changing nature of fur trade society placed mixed-blood women at a disadvantage by making them prone to sexual exploitation,[106] Hargrave's correspondence does not note any specific change in the discussion of mixed-blood women's physical beauty over time. In the 1820s when mixed-blood wives were still in fashion, handsome mixed-

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[104] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to Andrew Hargrave, York Factory, 11 July 1833. See also NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to James Mitchel, York Factory, 6 September 1826.

[105] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 8 July 1829.

[106] Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, pp. 145-172.

blood women were often mentioned as being prime candidates for marriage. John Siveright, who was obviously of Jane Austen's opinion that single men in good situations are automatically in search of wives, dropped several hints about the abundance of eligible "Young Ladies" in his neighbourhood.[107] Siveright knew that Hargrave was not immune to the charms of beauty and consequently advised him that he "had better soon come forward or some of these dashing Young American Officers will be carrying off Eliza.... Dr. Hoskins ... is a fine Young fellow & certainly Deserving of as handsome & Good Wife as Miss E. would make.—"[108] As Hargrave had already determined not to marry in the Country, Siveright's hints were to no avail; however, his resolve certainly did not stop him from appreciating "a sweet sonsy girl" who had "a plump waist and well turned limb with a warm & yielding heart to animate them."[109] Although Hargrave had presumed that the influx of white wives in the 1830s would bring a new standard of beauty that would "cast a still deeper shade over the faces of our Brunetts *(sic)* in the eyes of many,"[110] the letters show that their presence did not dim the "darke-eyed *(sic)* beauty"[111] of the "black eyed sparklers."[112] The standards for evaluating physical beauty did not change significantly over

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107 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 10, John Siveright to James Hargrave, Sault Ste. Marie, 10 May 1823; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 20-21, John Siveright to James Hargrave, Ft. Coulonge, 2 May 1824.

108 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 20-21, John Siveright to James Hargrave, Ft. Coulonge, 2 May 1824.

109 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to John McLeod, Ft. Garry, 5 December 1826; NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, Ft. Garry, 24 March 1827.

110 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Charles Ross, York Factory, 1 December 1830.

111 HBCA E21/6 fo. 67, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, 27 January, 1839.

112 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to Thomas McMurray, Moose Factory, 16 August 1837.

the period; consequently, in terms of beauty, mixed-blood women appear to have consistently found favour with the correspondents.

When white wives were introduced in Indian Country in the 1830s, they were judged by the same physical standards as the mixed-blood women. Surprisingly enough, most of the comments regarding them are more restrained than those about mixed-blood women. There may have been a number of reasons for this. Respect for the women and their husbands may have constrained discussions of specific female attributes. Their physical beauty may have been secondary to the actual fact of their presence in the society. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, their roles as wives may have placed physical attraction below other virtues on a scale of social value. The key descriptor for white women who arrived in the Country was 'fair.'[113] This generic adjective complimented the women without endowing them with any specific or outstanding traits. As a result, the lasting impression of these women is one of innocuous pleasantness. Even John Stuart at his most effusive and sycophantic did not choose to present a clear picture when he described Frances Simpson in 1830. "I need not tell you that the divinity whom he [Governor Simpson] adores is fair you have seen her but I may state that I do not recollect ever to have met with so much perfection unmixed with any alloy—."[114] Another of Hargrave's friends and correspondents, his 'Old Bourgeois' Donald McKenzie described his Swiss-born wife Adelgonde Druz in much more pragmatic terms. Although this letter is not part of his

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[113] HBCA E21/6 fo. 62, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Fort Confidence, 25 September 1838. See also HBCA E21/6 fo. 65, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Fort Confidence, 17 January 1838; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 306, Cuthbert Cumming to James Hargrave, St. Maurice, 1 March 1831; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 275, Duncan Finlayson to James Hargrave, Red River, 18 December 1830.

[114] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 261, John Stuart to James Hargrave, Bas de la Rivière, 12 December 1830.

correspondence with Hargrave, it is important, as he makes it perfectly clear that Adelgonde's physical beauty is secondary to her virtues. He stresses that she is "much thought of as to looks but is anything except a paragon of beauty." Although McKenzie credits her with a long list of other virtues, he notes that it is her taciturnity that he values the most: "for you may rely upon it that nothing can give greater comfort to a husband than the satisfaction of having a wife who is nearly mute."[115] Coming from an individual who was recognised not only for his good business sense and good relations with his employees, but also for his congeniality and ability to spin a tale, this insight provides an clear indication of the subordinate position of women—Indian, mixed-blood, or white—in fur trade society.

The mythical ideal nineteenth-century woman was pious, submissive, domestic, and pure.[116] Although the letters do not indicate that Hargrave and his correspondents considered piety a quintessential female virtue, there is evidence to suggest that they believed that women should be pious. This belief emerges in complaints about the difficulty of converting adult Indians to Christianity and is reflected in the denigration of Indian religious beliefs to the level of superstitions. Indian women who did not become Christians were judged negatively and believed to prevent others—especially their children—from assimilating. This understanding is reflected in Richard

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115 Hunt Papers, Donald McKenzie to Wilson Price Hunt, 25 June 1827. As quoted in Brown, "Changing Views," p. 103. McKenzie had been Chief Factor when Hargrave was stationed at Red River. His geniality and genuine concern for the young men working under him won him their lasting support and friendship. Hargrave viewed him as a mentor who had been his "staunch support thro' good & thro' bad report" and regretted his decision to retire in 1833. Ironically, McKenzie's taciturn wife had the last say, for she maintained her policy of silence by burning his uncompleted memoirs after his death. NAC MG19, A. 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 10 July 1832; NAC MG19, A. 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to Donald McKenzie, York Factory, 20 February 1833.

116 Welter, p. 21.

Harding's complaints about his half-breed Interpreter, Dunning. While he grants Dunning a high compliment by referring to him as "a decent steady man,"[117] he fears that he is too much the Indian to be a reliable Interpreter. Moreover, he fears that the man is running a private trade and places all the blame for Dunning's shortcomings squarely on the shoulders of Dunning's wife, "a thorough bred Indian woman with all their superstitions even after so many years residence with the whites."[118] On top of these already serious charges, he relates a tale that reinforces one of the Gentlemen's most common fears about unconverted Indian women who were the mothers of half-breed daughters. As even converted Indian women's dedication to the preservation of chastity was considered suspect, it was presumed that unconverted Indian mothers were not only unchaste themselves, but that they corrupted their daughters. As such, their unconverted state made them potential forces of evil from which innocent young females had to be protected. Harding's letter indicates that he felt that this was certainly the case with one of Dunning's daughters. He grumbles that Dunning gave one of his daughters in marriage to "a mere Chepoweyan *(sic)* boy" the previous year and that this alliance had been set up by the machinations of the girl's mother and grandmother.

> The girl had previously been with her grandmother with this boy and others at a tent about a month. well *(sic)* knowing the character of her associates I spoke to her father on the subject telling him in plain terms that I considered such as indecent and either to take her away or give her to the Indian who wanted her.... It being my opinion that she had been improperly permitted to mix with them in consequence might as well go altogether and she went accordingly no doubt being pressed on by her

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[117] NAC MG19, A. 21 (C74) Series 1 fo.2216, Richard Harding to James Hargrave, Churchill, 3 January 1842.

[118] *Ibid.*

> mother and grandmother and every person but the right one her father. so *(sic)* much for pettycoat *(sic)* government on a small scale. decency *(sic)* and discipline at the same time![119]

In addition to posing threats to their daughters' purity, unconverted Indian women did not occupy Christian women's God-ordained role as men's subordinates; consequently, they threatened to usurp male authority and upset the 'natural' balance of society.

In order to guarantee that half-breed girls were brought up as Christians, Gentlemen often made special efforts to ensure that their daughters received religious instruction as part of their English-style educations. At Red River the two went hand in hand, for girls were regularly taught by the wives of the settlement's ministers and sometimes were even under the ministers' guardianship. For example, in 1829 James Hargrave assured Cuthbert Cumming that his half-breed daughters were attending Mrs. Cockran's Female School and that they were "safe under the wing of The Revd. *(sic)* Mr. Cockran, form part of his family, are instructed both in the usual learning and the duties of Housewifery, and by Mr. McK's [McKenzie's] good management, cost you nothing."[120] Francis Heron was obviously not always this financially fortunate, for he periodically remarked at the expense his children's education occasioned him; however, he did not grudge the money: "I assure you, it appears to be money well laid out, as the improved condition of my little ones convinces me of—."[121] While female education at Red River may have often been

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[119] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo.2218, Richard Harding to James Hargrave, Churchill, 3 January 1842.

[120] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 8 July 1829.

[121] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1, Francis Heron to James Hargrave, Red River Settlement, 9 June 1835.

dominated by domestic skills and frivolous accomplishments, religious instruction was never far from the surface, a fact that James Hargrave pointed out when he congratulated Rev'd. Cockran on his success with female education: "I am truly happy to hear of their prosperity & deeply indebted should they be to you both for the care you take in guiding their infant minds in that only course which can benefit them both here and hereafter."[122]

Many mixed-blood girls subsequently made socially-acceptable marriages with men in the white community, a fact which indicates that their education succeeded in giving them at least the veneer of piety that was considered essential for Victorian women. Of course, some mixed-blood women like Ellen Barnston appear to have been genuinely religious.[123] In providing Hargrave with an insight to his regular domestic life at Martin's Falls, George Barnston portrays his wife as engrossed in reading her Bible and highly interested in church catechism.[124]

While the Correspondence has little to say about the piety of the white women who came to the Country as wives after the 1830s, this appears to be mainly because it was taken for granted. Female piety was considered especially important in ministers' wives and teachers. Although Thomas Simpson did not himself appear to have been an exceptionally pious man, piety is the first of the characteristics that he approvingly remarked upon

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[122] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 4, James Hargrave to Rev'd. Wm. Cockran, York Factory, 24 June 1829.

[123] In December 1853, Rev'd. John Black married Henrietta Ross, the mixed-blood daughter of Alexander Ross. Although many members of the Presbyterian congregation feared the consequences of this union, Henrietta's genuine piety and her concern for others made her an excellent minister's wife. See Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, p. 234.

[124] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Martin's Falls, 2 February 1836.

when describing the new teacher, Miss Armstrong, to James Hargrave: "I found Miss Armstrong a pious, unaffected, well read lady, and a fearless traveller...."[125] Several years later, on the occasion of Hargrave's marriage, J.D. Cameron rather clumsily complimented Hargrave on his choice of a wife by alluding to the presumably exceptional piety of Letitia Hargrave and Isobel Finlayson:

> I was really happy to learn that the Ladies had reached York Factory in good health without having suffered much from the Long Sea voyage. I must believe that the Ladies were very good Ladies indeed—Since the ship had a much shorter passage than usual—Their Prayers must have ascended up to Heaven among the Prayers of the Righteous.[126]

Women who were pious presumably followed the dictates of the Church, which in the first half of the nineteenth century meant submission and subordination to men. Although Indian women were automatically presumed to be subordinate to "their lords,"[127] they were not noted for their submission to white male authorities.[128] This belief was held by George Simpson, who believed that Gentlemen who gave up their authority to their country wives or placed their family concerns above those of the Company became "drones" and posed a threat to the continued success of the trade.[129] This tendency to upset the 'natural' order did not sit well with men who firmly believed that good women—be they mothers, sisters, or wives; Indian, mixed blood, or

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[125] HBCA E21/6 fo. 20, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Red River, 9 December 1835.

[126] Glazebrook, no. 134, "J.D. Cameron to James Hargrave, La Cloche, 25 April 1841," p. 344.

[127] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 8 July 29.

[128] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo.2218, Richard Harding to James Hargrave, Churchill, 3 January 1842.

[129] Frederick Merk, ed., *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal 1824-1825*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1968), p. 131.

white—should be submissive and pay strict attention to the dictates of their male counterparts.

James Hargrave's long-distance relationship with his younger sister Jane provides an excellent example of the type of obedience that was expected from women. When Hargrave heard that Jane has a possibility of marrying, he sent her £18 for her wedding, with "the single injunction of not drawing the money till you were certain of wanting it for the purpose it was sent."[130] Unfortunately for Jane, the marriage did not take place and she decided to contribute nearly all of her money into the construction of her parents' new home. When Hargrave heard about this expenditure, he lectured Jane severely. "You have sadly mismanaged the money I sent you, and having praised you so far as to leave it in your hands...I must say I did expect you would have attended to what I said more punctually than you have done...instead you have disregarded the only request I made on the subject."[131] Even though Hargrave was correct in scolding Jane for not protecting her own interests and keeping the money in case of future offers, this issue did not seem to be as significant to Hargrave as her disobedience. Hargrave later acknowledges this to his mother, stating that he had "scolded her [Jane] a little, for I think she deserves it, having broken the only injunction I laid on her when I sent her the money."[132]

As married men, Hargrave and his correspondents expected their wives and daughters to fill subordinate, supporting roles. As Company wives, regardless of ethnicity, these women were expected to make the best of their

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[130] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 5, James Hargrave to Jane Hargrave, York Factory, 23 June 1830.

[131] *Ibid.*

[132] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 5, James Hargrave to Jane Melrose, York Factory, 24 June 1830.

situations and act as positive helpmeets for their husbands. However, the men were not unaware of the monotony and loneliness experienced by their womenfolk, especially when they were isolated in remote posts. When writing to James Hargrave to congratulate him on his marriage, John Lee Lewes noted that his wife and daughter Emma were very lonely as they had "no other society but themselves and our two little ones to wile *(sic)* away the dulness (sic) of Fort Simpson, such a monotony they do not find altogether agreeable, but that cannot be helped...."[133] Lewes' wife and daughter were not alone. In 1842, Letitia Hargrave commented somewhat enigmatically to her mother that she was "as well pleased with York as at first, but I only am from never thinking."[134] Although Letitia Hargrave was anything but a passive woman, her understanding of her role as a good wife and helpmeet prevented her from sharing these misgivings from her husband—a fact which becomes perfectly obvious when comparing Letitia's view of life at York Factory with the description Hargrave gave to George Simpson only a few months later:

> I am, in this solitary corner of the world—a most happy man. My dear wife is not only perfectly reconciled to her lot—but *really* seems to enjoy the quiet and lonely life which it is her fortune to lead—our little boy engrosses her whole mind, and his company makes up for the want of all those she left behind her—[135]

While it is possible that Letitia had become thoroughly reconciled to her life at York Factory in the space of the intervening months, it is rather unlikely. It is more likely that her understanding of the female gender role made her accept her subordinate role and make the best of her situation.

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[133] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series I fo. 1872, J.L. Lewes to James Hargrave, Fort Simpson, November 1841.

[134] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C84) Series 3, p. 6, Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald McTavish, York Factory, 10 April 1842.

[135] HBCA E61/32-35, James Hargrave to George Simpson, York Factory, 10 September 1842.

James Hargrave and George Simpson were both patriarchs who controlled their households with varying degrees of severity. Although the Hargraves appear to have had a strong marriage, Letitia Hargrave's letters to her family indicate that she was definitely her husband's subordinate. Her influence did not extend to having any input in naming her first child,[136] nor did she have any say in the plans for the boy's future education. However, she does not appear to feel overly constrained by her role; instead, she appears content to report to her parents that Hargrave had given her permission to take their son back to Scotland for his education when the time came: "Hargrave told me that he wld. let me go home with him [James Joseph]... it is a comfort to think that I shall not have to let the little creature go alone in the mean time."[137]

While Letitia Hargrave lived with a benevolent dictator, it is not clear that Frances Simpson's relationship with her husband was always as amicable. George Simpson expected and demanded obedience from his subordinates, and his wife certainly appears to have fallen into this category. Unfortunately for Frances, Simpson seems to have been unable to respect anyone who did not show at least a modicum of the bold, 'manly' traits that he so clearly believed he possessed. Frances did not possess any of these traits. She comes across the years as a somewhat colourless creature who personified the Victorian female gender role with its notions of passive and obedient womanhood and who subordinated her own personality in an attempt to live these ideals. Consequently, her married life appears to have

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[136] Margaret A. MacLeod, ed., no. 28, "Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald McTavish, York Factory, 14 June 1841," ***The Letters of Letitia Hargrave***, vol. XXVIII, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947), p. 96.

[137] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C84) Series 3, p. 5, Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald McTavish, York Factory, 10 April 1842.

been a study in subordination. Although Hargrave knew better than to ever comment on the Simpson domestic situation,[138] Letitia was not averse to sending her family a somewhat caustic description of an evening spent with the Governor and his wife:

> she [Frances] must not attempt to advise in any one way nor speak in support of what he does not see fit to do or hear. I observed all of this.... For one thing she sat with the tea tray on Sunday eveng., she asked if she shd. ring & have it taken away. Altho' he was done he said nothing & there it remains for long & two or three other matters of the same kind. If she speaks at all in opposition to him he bids her hold her tongue, as she knows nothing about it—Her mother said she told her that if she wd. exert herself and have a little mind of her own the Govr. wd. be a better husband & she a much more useful wife. But she says she wont *(sic)* as she wd. rather submit than run the risk of an argument. I dont *(sic)* mean that he is bad or cross to her, but he treats her & the little girl exactly alike.[139]

After another incident where Simpson had indicated to Hargrave that he believed that "his habits had unfitted him for a domestic life by making him too arbitrary," Letitia noted, "If you knew Mrs. Simpson you would wonder

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[138] MacLeod, no. 10, "Letitia Hargrave to Flora McTavish, Gravesend, 15 May 1840," p. 29. After several acerbic descriptions of George Simpson's interactions with his wife in previous letters, Letitia Hargrave subtly reminded her sister Flora that these comments had to remain strictly private:

> I find I was rash in committing to paper what I said of the family affairs of a person of whom I spoke yesterday. I have been desired by Mr. Hargrave never to let such a thing escape me as the hopes of all connected with us would be knocked to the ground were it ever suspected that such a subject had ever been mooted. I did not say that I had done so...."

While this statement implies that Hargrave agreed with Letitia's summation of the Simpson's domestic situation, he knew that Simpson's continued approbation was essential to his future success; consequently, he said nothing. Hargrave's understanding of the structures of male patronage and clientage which lay at the basis of fur trade society appear to have led him to find a way to support the actions of his superiors, even if they did not coincide with his personal beliefs. For instance, Hargrave's comments prior to 1830 indicated that he believed abandoning a country wife and family was an ungentlemanly act; yet, after an initially reticent response to the British marriages made by his friends and superiors, John George McTavish and George Simpson, he emerged in carefully-worded support of their characters if not specifically their actions.

[139] *Idem.*, no. 9, "Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald McTavish, Gravesend, 14-15 May 1840," p. 25.

at his discontent as the worst that can be said of her is that she is not like him. I would almost say too good for him...."[140]

The women who won the approval of Hargrave and his correspondents also possessed the female virtue of domesticity. Neither ethnicity or class appear to have affected the men's approval of what they perceived to be proper domestic habits among women. The letters contain numerous references to the domestic accomplishments of Indian and mixed-blood women. Consequently, Rev'd Wm. Cockran's praise of "Pegweis's Old Lady" because she "makes her butter and attends to the duties of her house like a good Matron"[141] indicates that this native woman was readily able to meet British gender requirements. J.D. Cameron's comments about the industriousness of his Ojibwa wife Mary show a grudging respect for her activity, if not an understanding of her motives: "My old *Rib* is still at her sugar bush—where she has been for nearly six weeks—She has made about six hundred pounds sugar—all for waste."[142] While the skills of 'Housewifery' were considered essential for all women, they were considered especially important for mixed-blood girls who were already presumed to be endowed with a host of positive female character traits. Hargrave believed that mixed-blood girls were "naturally careful, clean, industrious & docile,—and want only to be taught the labours of a good housewife, to be placed on a

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[140] *Idem.*, no. 18, "Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald McTavish, on board the Prince Rupert, 7-14 June 1840," p. 46.

[141] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1291, Rev'd. Wm. Cockran to James Hargrave, Grand Rapids, 8 August 1836. Although Cockran was not of the officer class himself, his position in fur trade society as a member of the clergy granted him a rough equality with Hargrave and his fellow Gentlemen.

[142] Glazebrook, no. 134, "J.D. Cameron to James Hargrave, La Cloche, 25 April 1841," p. 345.

par, at the furthest in one or two generations hence, with their fairer sisterhood at home.—"[143]

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, as the Gentlemen began to identify themselves increasingly with the middle class, these basic female domestic skills began to take a second place to the domestic accomplishments which identified middle-class women. The changing nature of fur trade society is reflected in the type of education and praise given to mixed-blood women during this period. While contemplating the idea of female education at Red River in 1822, Rev'd West had originally presumed that its object would be to teach girls "to knit, and make articles of clothing to wear, like those which white people wore."[144] These goals were quickly superseded, and by the mid-1830s female education at Red River followed the British model, providing the girls with a smattering of facts, a thorough knowledge of needlework, a clear understanding of appropriate lady-like behaviours, and an introduction to the essential middle-class female accomplishment—music.[145] As middle-class sentiments grew in the ranks of the Gentlemen, the educations and accomplishments of their wives and daughters became

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[143] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to Rev'd Wm. Cockran, York Factory, 4 August 1833.

[144] West, p. 103.

[145] Glazebrook, no. 88, "Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 22 February 1836," p. 288. Ross had just returned from a trip to Red River and several visits to the Rev'd Jones' Female Establishment. In one of his numerous sly attempts to persuade Hargrave to think seriously about marriage, Ross described the institution, its British orientation, and took no pains to hide his obvious approval of the young ladies therein. While the school population was made up of mixed-blood girls, Ross's comments do not appear to be affected by any remnants of racism:

> indeed their whole establishment is so very delightful and reminds one so strongly of our fatherland, that it is almost impossible for a person to pass it without stepping in—the presence of the young *ladies*, even to an old fellow like myself, you may be sure was no small inducement to go there often; there are really some splendid girls among them, "such as Poets fancy when they dream." but *(sic)* what is the use of my telling all this to a dry & sapless stick like you....

signifiers of their class membership. Consequently, playing (the piano) and singing became prerequisites for all well-educated mixed-blood daughters.[146] The letters indicate that after 1830 mixed-blood girls tend to be complimented less on the grounds of their housewifely skills or because they are viewed as "Good and deserving,"[147] and more because they are "fine clever and accomplished."[148] The growing importance attached to female education and accomplishments was undoubtably increased by the growing number of white wives in the Country after 1830. However, it is important to note that those men who returned to Britain to marry all chose women who fit the middle-class ideal of being "pretty accomplished & well-educated."[149]

The association of female accomplishments with a middle-class lifestyle and British culture is indicative of the emergence of secondary mores in fur trade society. As the traditional carriers of culture, women's roles were increasingly defined by nineteenth-century middle-class British gender beliefs. No where in the Correspondence is the symbolism of the piano or the association of women, music, and culture clearer than in Duncan Finlayson's description of evenings spent enjoying Frances Simpson's piano-playing and George Simpson's fine porter:

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[146] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 802, J. McMillan to James Hargrave, Forks Red River, 10 June 1834; Glazebrook, no. 58, "James McMillan to James Hargrave, Forks Red River, 19 June 1834," p. 143; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1109, A. Christie to James Hargrave, Red River Settlement, 10 December 1835. The mixed-blood girls' ability to play the piano must have made a great impression on McMillan, for he was still talking about it in his letter of 19 June 1834. When Miss Armstrong arrived in Red River to take over female education in 1835, her inability to teach music was considered a serious mark against her.

[147] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Mr. Hallett, York Factory, 30 August 1828.

[148] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1177G, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 22 February 1836.

[149] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 306, Cuthbert Cumming to James Hargrave, St. Maurice, 1 March 1831.

> The Piano and ...porter came up safe, the former beguiles many a tedious hour, when touched by the fair & delicate fingers of her who is the brightest star of our gay Circle, and the latter while our ears are charmed with the former is very grateful to the palate, so much so, that like the Ettrick Shepherd's Hotchpotch it gives a dim grandeur to the Scene—Old Bunn gives a nod of assent to every note of the instrument, as if such was an important accompanyment *(sic)* and Pritchard not to be backward in his praises keeps time in Smacking his chaps to the tune of the Brown Jug—even Donald himself instead of frequenting all the Stumps & Logs about the Fort for the purpose of spinning a yarn, now lounges alongside this attractive instrument....[150]

This magnetic power of the pianist and the instrument to capture the attention of all present in the room is echoed throughout the Correspondence as Hargrave and his colleagues first attempt to capture aspects of their home society in their personal lives, and then as they gain positions of power and prestige, in fur trade society as a whole.

As carriers of British gender beliefs, Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen judged the women they met on the basis of their piety, submissiveness, domesticity, and purity. Of all of these female virtues, purity was the most important. In the first half of the nineteenth century it became the prime commodity of middle-class women in Britain and in the Indian Country. More than any other British gender belief, the belief in the pre-eminence of female chastity signified the growing class sentiments of the Gentlemen and resulted in the ethnic stratification of male-female relationships in fur trade society.

In the nineteenth century all sexuality was suspect; however, contemporary gender beliefs defined female sexuality as especially

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[150] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 275, Duncan Finlayson to James Hargrave, Red River, 18 December 1830.

problematical. While all women were considered sexual by nature, the careful education and rigid social structures which were erected to protect middle-class British women's chastity defused their sexuality and rendered them both safe and moral. However, lower class women who were uneducated and acted in the public sphere where they were open to corrupting influences, as well as women in 'uncivilised' countries, were considered close to nature and presumed to be actively and continuously sexual. Thus, these women presented a continuous temptation to men. As chastity became the virtue that defined respectable, middle-class femininity, this new emphasis was brought to the fur trade by young officers such as James Hargrave and his contemporaries. The implementation of this increasingly rigid gender belief in fur trade society was detrimental to the status of native and mixed-blood women, as it played a decisive role in the establishment of the double standard and the devolution of country marriage.[151]

Hargrave's correspondence indicates that traders were fully aware of the fact that different Indian tribes had different expectations of female sexuality; nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the Gentlemen attached any importance to these different gender beliefs, or that British gender beliefs were modified by an understanding of these variations. Instead, Indian women were judged according to British gender beliefs; thus, it is not surprising that they seldom met the requirements.[152] As the officers'

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151 Van Kirk, ***Many Tender Ties***, pp. 146-166, 224-230.

152 As Governor, George Simpson's beliefs and attitudes carried a great deal of social weight. He formed the majority of his opinions about Indians—male and female—during his first year in Rupert's Land. Unfortunately, most of his opinions were negative and once he had made up his mind he very seldom changed it. Simpson believed that Indian women were sexual and adulterous by nature. In his eyes, they could only achieve continence if their husbands controlled them—vigorously. In judging them and their cultures, he used his preconceived notions of female sexuality. Consequently, he was contemptuous of the Chipewyan women who were "not celebrated for their continence," although their husbands gained approval because "their vigilance ... cannot be surpassed." Only the Beaver Indians

gender beliefs became more rigid over time, Indian women's looser sexual conventions were associated more and more with the vice-ridden lower classes. Consequently, long-term relationships with them were discouraged. By the mid-1830s, these ideas had become so pervasive among the officers that men such as Cuthbert Cumming were conditioned to expect Indian women to be unchaste if left alone for any length of time. As a young man, Cumming had taken an Indian woman for a country wife. Although he no longer lived with her, he continued to support her and the children at Red River. Her decision to become sexually involved with a half-breed man and then take him as a new husband in the mid-1830s was not improper given Indian gender beliefs. However, neither Hargrave nor Cumming with his strict interpretation of British gender beliefs could understand her action as anything but adultery. Hargrave's contempt for the woman is evident in his word choice when he writes to Cumming to inform him of her infidelity:

> By the way I am informed that your old dame last winter to comfort herself for your absence, has got caught buckled to a strapping half breed....So much the better for you, my dear fellow:—Your family are now nearly all grown up, & a provision for her was becoming the heaviest of your burdens there.—[153]

Cumming summarily cast her off and informed Hargrave that "by that step she has forfeted *(sic)* any claim which she previously had on me—."[154]

By the late 1830s, Gentlemen acknowledged that the day of Indian women as marital partners had passed. Although many factors coincided to

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who practiced strict monogamy and refused intermarriage won his approval. Even then, his compliments were not directed at the chaste Indian women, but rather reflected his implicit belief that this strict definition of sexuality could only be male-created and male-instituted. Rich, ed., ***Simpson's Athabaska Journal***, fo. 33, 11 October 1820, p. 79; Galbraith, 61-66.

[153] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 11, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 6 August 1835.

[154] Glazebrook, ed., no. 85, "Cuthbert Cumming to James Hargrave, Mingan, 1835," p. 218.

create this reality, the universal perception of Indian women's inborn wantonness certainly acted as a contributing factor. Hargrave made this clear when he assured his fiancee Letitia that her mother need not worry about her brother William becoming involved with Indian women, for "a young Gentleman from Britain would as soon think as matching himself with the contemporary of his grandmother as with a pure squaw."[155] The language used by the men in the Correspondence reflects their belief that Indian women were ready and willing sexual partners. Sexual metaphors reiterate the traditional male-active, female-passive polarity of gender beliefs. Men are referred to as animals making raids on ripe fruit, fishermen angling for salmon, or very bluntly "as two dogs, pardon me, in sight of a Bone a well fucked one certainly."[156] In spite of these crude descriptions, sexual relations with Indian women were still expected to conform to certain social conventions. For instance, rape was never acceptable, even if Indian women were considered sexual beings. In a private and confidential letter to Cuthbert Cumming in 1829, Hargrave recounted the scandalous behaviour of Joseph McGillivray who had reputedly raped some Indian women at Norway House that spring. He noted that McGillivray was drunk when he attacked the women, but made no excuses for his behaviour. Instead, he rather wryly pointed out that while these women were often like fruit for the taking, they expected and deserved to be asked if they wanted to participate in sexual intercourse: "they however it seems still like to be *asked*, and raised a bustle about the neglect of that ceremony, their lords flew to arms, and a

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[155] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 13, James Hargrave to Letitia McTavish, York Factory, 24 July 1838.

[156] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 8 July 1829; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 76, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Alexander, 20 February 1826.

serious row was with much difficulty prevented."[157] While the balance of power between the Indians and the Company was gradually changing to favor the Company during this period, rape was not acceptable to either group. By flouting this recognised social convention, McGillivray was actually going against both British and Indian gender beliefs. [158]

Mixed-blood women inhabited an increasingly difficult position in fur trade society between 1823 and 1850. Their heritage gave them physical charms that made them desirable as sexual partners and companions, but presumably also left them with an inherited tendency to Indian women's moral frailty. While many mixed-blood women successfully assimilated into the middle-class fur trade social order, it is not surprising to note that some had difficulty adjusting to the changing sexual sanctions. Personifying a diverse heritage with two different—albeit related—perceptions of gender, some mixed-blood women must have received a confusing array of messages. Presumably those women whose parents realised that inculcation of middle-class mores were necessary to improve their daughters' chances for good marriages made the transition most successfully. This belief is reflected in the Correspondence in a definite split in the perception of mixed-blood women's morality. On the one hand, mixed-blood women who were able to conform to the increasingly constrained nineteenth-century definition of femininity and especially the growing emphasis on female chastity fulfilled the female gender role and consequently were discussed by the Gentlemen in

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[157] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 8 July 1829.

[158] McGillivray was a mixed-blood officer who may have been operating out of a different set of gender beliefs than either the British or the Indians; however, Hargrave's references to him do not indicate his mixed-blood origin, which implies that McGillivray was normally accepted as a peer.

the same terms as white women; on the other hand, mixed-blood women who could not or did not conform were condemned by the officers as sexual beings, associated with the lower classes, and assigned negative female traits. While ethnicity and class both played parts in determining the position of mixed-blood women in fur trade society during this period, gender was the underlying thread that determined the pattern in both cases.

Throughout the period, Hargrave and his correspondents consistently portray some mixed-blood women as respectable 'young ladies' or wives, while simultaneously describing others as sexually desirable and available objects. Rather unsurprisingly considering the presumed asexuality of respectable women, those mixed-blood women who were actual or potential wives were described in terms of their excellent or amiable characters and not in terms of their sexual appeal. For instance, the proliferation of remembrances to country wives and families which forms a refrain in the Correspondence does not appear to be made simply for the sake of courtesy. Hargrave's open affection for the country wives of Richard Grant, C. Grant, and Thomas McMurray is reflected in his oft-paraphrased "Give a kiss as my proxy to Madame,"[159] a mark of his genuine appreciation of these women's characters and his approval of their conduct as wives. When George Barnston takes a country wife in the late 1820s, Hargrave congratulates his friend and notes, "Our friend McMillan tells me your choice is a most judicious one;"[160] however, it is not until this young woman's conduct has

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[159] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 4 James Hargrave to C. Grant, York Factory, 30 November 1828; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to R. Grant, Fort Garry, 5 December 1826; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to Thomas McMurray, Moose Factory, 16 August 1837.

[160] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to George Barnston, York Factory, 14 July 1829.

been tested by time that Hargrave slips "a pound or two of Sweeties" into one of Barnston's orders for "the young *lassie* who I hear accompanies you." He notes that his gift is a simple recognition of her character: "I merely wish by this to show my regard to a young female who under all the disadvantages of country has had merit to touch the heart of my friend."[161] True to the double-edged perception of female sexuality, those mixed-blood women who did not meet the gender requirements to become wives were normally treated as sexual objects. Thus, after a bad flood devastated the Canadian settlement at Red River in 1826, Hargrave complained bitterly that the natural disaster had resulted in a sexual disaster for him, as "a willing wench is scarcely to be found for love or money."[162] Earlier that same year, a still single, but hardly celibate George Barnston had hinted that he was involved with "a certain loose and yet firm Piece of Furniture," but declined to provide further details as "I intend it as *my Dish* at Our next Pic Nic Tête à Tête."[163] Sexually appealing mixed-blood women were viewed as "play-mate[s],"[164] and Hargrave noted that had he wanted to establish a relationship with a mixed-blood woman, Mary Taylor would have been his ideal choice: "I have scarcely seen a young woman of her caste I should have preferred before her.—"[165]

In the 1820s, chastity had not yet become the bugbear for mixed-blood women that it was to become later. The key word in Hargrave's previous statement is *caste*, for it was often a combination of factors stemming from

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161 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to to George Barnston, York Factory, 28 June 1831.

162 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Richard Grant, Fort Garry, 5 December 1826.

163 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 81, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Alexander, 16 March 1826.

164 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to John McLeod, York Factory, 12 July 1827.

165 *Ibid.*

mixed-blood women's origins rather than their perceived sexual flaws which persuaded young officers like James Hargrave and Thomas Simpson not to become entangled in country relationships. These upwardly-mobile young men of the 1820s and 1830s viewed their employment with the Company as a means of achieving a better standard of living and higher social status in the 'civilised' world. These men wanted wives who were possessions, symbolising their commercial success and rising social class. Minimally educated, often lacking the prerequisite accomplishments of British middle-class women, and ill-prepared to deal with all of the complex behavioural structures seen as necessary for successful nineteenth-century middle-class integration, mixed-blood women lacked the veneer of sophistication that these young men deemed necessary in their wives. As such, these young officers decided to remain clear of country relationships and postpone their marriages until they were able to obtain the type of women that they wanted and maintain them in the appropriate style. With these goals in mind, becoming involved in country relationships was often deemed a sign of weakness. Hargrave believed that many of the men who entered country marriages had simply given in to their baser urges and thus had doomed themselves to a future with a growing and half-civilised family at much-despised Red River. Hargrave was already aware of all of the dangers of these liaisons in 1826 when he bluntly advised a fellow clerk not to marry his country wife:

> When you get astride of a half breed in a manner approved of by the Clergy so sure will Red River be the home to which she will canter away with you when misfortune or age closes our present avocations.—To such as you & me take my word for it this place is the antipodes of Paradise. Neither of us are fitted to become cormorants & prey upon the catfish, neither I guess would pass our time very agreeably day after day by the side of a pool like a heron watching a frog. Such is an

> odd sort of road to happiness yet such is the present fate of many here who once held our rank in the country, and to which fate matrimony alone has paved the way.—[166]

For men like Hargrave and Simpson, the threat of a bleak future in the isolation of Red River was enough to preclude any possibility of marriage with mixed-blood women, no matter how personally appealing. As the number of upwardly-mobile young men who entered the Service in the years after the merger increased and psychological distances between Britain, Canada, and the Indian Country decreased, a complex web of factors developed to discourage the establishment of long-term relationships with mixed-blood women. This downturn was hastened by the growth of class consciousness among the Gentlemen and the increasingly stringent demands placed on female chastity by the development of the cult of respectability near the middle of the century.

Chastity became more important for mixed-blood women from the 1830s onwards. By 1833, female chastity had become the goal of all of those concerned with elevating the 'Half-caste race.' Although Hargrave among others held out hope for achieving this goal, he did not believe that absolute purity could be obtained in one generation, as "much time and long continued care will yet be required to raise even their youngest children to an equality with their fairer sisterhood."[167] At the same time, sexual respectability also took on new importance for men. While men were not necessarily expected to be chaste, they were increasingly expected to keep their sexual peccadillos quiet. Gossip also took on new power in the fur

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[166] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to Donald McKenzie, Fort Garry, 5 December 1826. See also Brown, "Changing Views," p. 93. This Donald McKenzie was a clerk about twelve years older than Hargrave. He did not take Hargrave's advice and went on to marry his country wife in 1836 and settle in Red River.

[167] As quoted in Brown, "Changing Views," p. 96.

trade, as it is touched the characters of mixed-blood women and Company Gentlemen alike.

The Correspondence reflects these sentiments and shows how the web of contacts between the Gentlemen was used to spread the new interpretation of gender, firm moral resolve, and chastise those who appeared to be slipping away from the ideal. For instance, when inviting Hargrave to visit Red River in 1836, Thomas Simpson warned him in advance that he would have to beware the charms of "the bright eyes in the gallery."[168] However, he also noted, "why *I* have braved them all intact, and so would you, unless you chose otherwise...."[169] While Hargrave remained a bachelor until his marriage in 1840, he was not always chaste, and upon occasion he was castigated by his friends for his reputed sexual activities. In August 1835, Rev'd. William Cockran had heard some gossip about Hargrave which prompted him, as a friend and clergyman, to write and warn Hargrave that a relationship in the Country could spell personal ruin. Cockran's letter pressured Hargrave to look around him and follow the shining example of celibacy set by another friend, Duncan Finlayson:

> I am sorry to hear that you do not keep the same respectable distance from the ladies as usual. You must not follow the example of the multitude. But see Mr. Finlayson a much older Man, and longer in the Country, and he keeps himself unspotted. And Why cannot you! If you form a connection in this Country you will repent it for life. Watch and pray that ye may not fall into the snare which has ruined many of our Countrymen.[170]

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[168] HBCA E21/6 fo. 30, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Red River, 28 November 1836.

[169] *Ibid.*

[170] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1078, Rev'd. Wm. Cockran to James Hargrave, Red River Settlement, 8 August 1835.

Although Hargrave hastened to refute this tale, attributing it to "the thirst for tattle so prevalent in this land,"[171] rumours proliferated after 1830. While Hargrave was not alone in bearing the brunt of the scandal machine in the 1830s, his conduct just prior to marriage spawned so many rumours that even Duncan Finlayson was prompted to comment somewhat reprovingly: "Your gallantry never appeared to be so much the subject of Conversation, as this year, & I now begin to suspect, that you were desirous of having some exercise to prove your mettle, before you became a Benedicte."[172]

One of these rumours is worth brief examination for it emphasises the heightened importance of female chastity by the end of the 1830s. Just prior to his trip to England, Hargrave had been falsely accused of having a sexual liaison with Alexander Christie's maid. The rumour had been started in a fit of jealousy by Angus, the cook, who was enamoured of the girl but not making any progress towards a conquest. While Hargrave was upset by the rumour and made Finlayson promise to inflict a fitting punishment on hapless Angus, the men chose not to create a public stir about the issue. Consequently, the gossip wore itself out and the girl eventually married one of George Flett's sons. After examining their method of handling of the situation in retrospect, Finlayson concluded that they had made the right decision, especially as the girl's chances for marriage would have been blighted by any publicity: "[her marriage] I am convinced, would not have been the case, had we made some noise about them—because it would attach a stain to her character let it ever be so spotless, that could not be easily washed

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171 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 11 James Hargrave to Rev'd. Wm. Cockran, York Factory, 10 September 1835.

172 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1716, Duncan Finlayson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 12 August 1839.

off—"[173] This statement indicates that nineteenth-century British middle-class gender beliefs with their insistence on female chastity as women's principal virtue had become the norm in fur trade society by the end of the 1830s.

The exaggerated importance placed on female chastity in Britain and in the Country was the manifestation of a philosophy which encouraged men to view women as personal and absolute property and ultimately valued women only according to the 'market value' of their chastity. 'Used goods' were valueless. This code was supported by the underlying belief that women's chastity was not their own to control; it was the property of their fathers, guardians, husbands, or employers.[174] As the gender beliefs which established this definition of femininity and the boundaries of acceptable female action had gradually narrowed the range of acceptable female behaviours and focussed on the issue of female sexuality, it had become necessary for Indian and mixed-blood women to conform to these new social sanctions or face ostracism. However, ethnicity was not the only issue when considering female chastity; class was equally significant. All working-class women were also considered inherently sexual and contemporaries believed that they could only be virtuous if their activities were strictly regulated by external forces. Although the calibre of female servants' work was not necessarily dependent on their chastity, their value to their employers as property was ascribed accordingly. Since it was commonly presumed that working-class women did not have the necessary strength of will to resist sexual temptation themselves, it is not surprising to find George Simpson

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[173] *Ibid.*

[174] Thomas, pp. 213-216.

requesting that Hargrave guard against the seduction of any female servants who were travelling on the same boat to the Country in 1840. Simpson noted that Hargrave's vigilance was necessary because "it is desirable that the women servants should not arrive in the Country with the slightest blemish on their reputation;" consequently, he advised Hargrave to "put on one of your fiercest looks if you see any of the people disposed to pay them marked attentions; which is not at all unusual on a long voyage."[175] Hargrave's efficacity as a warden can be assumed, for no reports of scandal follow the arrival of the boat.

After 1840, references to women and male-female relationships in the Correspondence are largely limited to family affairs. Even scandal appears to be less prevalent.[176] While this may be a factor of the increasing age and responsibility of the correspondents, it may also reflect fur trade society's acceptance of nineteenth-century British gender beliefs and subsequently the society's relatively uneventful operation within this framework. Although the adoption of this social code had essentially precluded Indian women from being successfully integrated into the new highly class-conscious society which had developed at Red River by the middle of the century, mixed-blood women who possessed the desired middle-class female virtues

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175 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fos. 1843-44, George Simpson to James Hargrave, London, 8 June 1840.

176 My discussion ends before the outbreak of the Ballenden-Foss-Pelly scandal which occurred at the beginning of the 1850s. This decision was taken for two reasons. Extending the scope of my research to include a detailed discussion of the scandal would have meant including any other applicable information which occurred during that time period and the combination would have made this thesis unmanageably large. Secondly, my primary concern at this time is the information reflected in the Hargrave Correspondence. While this scandal is discussed at length by Letitia Hargrave, it does not appear to have created quite the same impression for the male correspondents; thus, I felt that its exclusion would not materially harm my argument.

appear to have been capable of making the transition successfully.[177] In the more remote reaches of the fur trade, the older customs remained in vogue longer; however, improved transportation and communication systems encouraged the development of homogeneous social structures.

While the increased rigidification of gender beliefs during the period presumably condemned to perdition any women who did not follow societal norms, the story of Mary Taylor indicates that even these societal myths could be superseded through face-to-face relationships in the fur trade's relatively small community. As the mixed-blood daughter of a Hudson's Bay Company Gentleman, Mary Taylor quickly won the approval of James Hargrave in the 1820s. Possessing not only physical appeal but a cheerful disposition and winning ways, Mary was considered an ideal potential country wife.[178] Although Hargrave's resolve to stay clear of country relationships led him to carefully disentangle himself from any possible marital obligations towards Mary, his view of spinsterhood as an unnatural state for women led him to be genuinely concerned that Mary "should run the risk of leading apes."[179] While Mary was jilted at least once, by the mid-1830s she had become the wife of Hudson's Bay Company Gentleman John

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[177] Although Van Kirk details the problems in assimilation suffered by a number of mixed-blood women, she tends to gloss over the many successful marriages made by those women who were able to conform to the nineteenth-century ideal of womanhood. It is also significant to note that the references which Van Kirk cites when highlighting the difficulties encountered by mixed-blood women are all predicated upon the problems posed by female-female relationships. While ethnicity played a certain part in the antagonisms which developed between certain white and mixed-blood women in Red River in the 1840s, it may only represent the tip of the iceberg. Female-female relationships are always rife with complex and intricate undercurrents and nuances, and the competition for male approval in the nineteenth century may have geometrically increased any inherent tensions. Further study of the effects that prevailing gender beliefs have on female-female relationships may yield some interesting insights.

[178] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to J. McLeod, Fort Garry, 5 December 1826.

[179] *Ibid.*

Stuart who was years her senior. Her married life remained unrecorded until scandal erupted in 1834 after Mary was seduced by a French-Canadian Clerk named Annance.[180] Instead of simply putting Mary away or privately accepting matters and making amends, Stuart and Annance entered into a violent public confrontation that fulfilled fur trade society's penchant for smutty and titillating details. Since the affair was eventually brought before Council, Hargrave became involved in reading the Bills, much to his disgust:

> Both parties filed Bills of Accusation before Council;—both most voluminous, minute in detail & alike broadly expressed.—It fell to my lot to entertain...by reading them in Council, & I speak seriously when I say that I believe in conscience I never spoke so much Bawdy (?) in all my life together,—composed of all topics from simple fornication to the unheard of charge of a husband commiting a rape on his own wife.—But to avoid this dirt,—let me hasten to the end:—the Council declined interfering in what they justly consider a private Charge,—.... Both parties are hastening out, & both breathing threats of fire & revenge, the one for the seduction of what was the owner says he considered his legal wife before God & man; The other spouting about...imprisonment, personal violence including assault for the purpose of castration,.... The details would fill a volume.—but *(sic)* the upshot is at present that Both have full permission to leave the country & the result may be that our unfortunate character for Morals will yet receive a deeper aye by this exposure of the acts of two worthless & degraded—fools.—It may not however go so far, as I even yet would not wonder to see Aesop & his Spora come out lovingly as ever...if I may so judge, from his language regarding her throughout all....[181]

Hargrave was correct in his assumption that Mary and Stuart might eventually resume their relationship. While nineteenth-century British

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[180] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to Cuthbert Cumming, York Factory, 8 August 1834.

[181] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 5 August 1834.

gender beliefs branded adulterous women for life, Stuart's genuine fondness for Mary made it difficult for him to accept such a harsh ruling. Mary and Stuart were still separated in 1836, but Stuart's comments to Hargrave from London revealed his inability to remain angry at her for her indiscretion: "—although the misconduct of Mary is the cause of her being now distant from me she has more amiable qualities than any other women *(sic)* I have known in the Indian Country and I have too good an opinion of her to think that any misconduct on her part since I left can be so glaring as to forfeit all claim."[182] As a mark of his concern for her well-being, Stuart set aside an amount of money for Mary. Unlike other portions set aside for ex-country wives, this money was not tied to her continued spinsterhood. Stuart's respect for Mary's judgment was reflected in his decision to place few strings on her choice of a future husband:

> I left it optional with herself to marry provided it was to white men no matter of what Country provided it was with the Consent of her Brother...but if she has married an Indian or a half Breed it is without my Consent but even in that Case provided the person is decent and that it is with the Consent of Tom I am perfectly willing that the whole be sent her—[183]

Mary's decision to remain unattached may have encouraged Stuart to take her back. At any rate, Stuart promised to marry her if she agreed to join him in Britain. Accordingly, Mary travelled to Britain. Once there, Stuart hesitated at making the final commitment and eventually decided not marry her after all. Nicol Finlayson conveyed these developments to Hargrave in 1838, commenting rather caustically that Stuart "pretended to say that his friends would not associate with him if he married her, but that is false, they

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182 NAC MG19, A. 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1216, John Stuart to James Hargrave, London, 29 April 1836.

183 *Ibid.*

did not wish to do so because he would not marry her"[184] Being put in such an embarrassing position caused Mary to bring her relationship with Stuart to an abrupt end. Taking matters into her own hands, she issued an unltimatum to Stuart, refusing to live with him without the sanction of legal marriage and made arrangements to return to the Country and live with her brother Tom.

According to the gender beliefs of the day, Mary's history of sexual infidelity and her ambiguous situation with John Stuart should have been enough to brand her a 'fallen woman' and elicit general societal condemnation. Instead, her personal characteristics and her reaction to Stuart's perfidiousness won her the respect and approval of some of the most respected Gentlemen in the fur trade. Nicol and Duncan Finlayson, James Hargrave, and even George Simpson felt that she had been severely wronged by Stuart and made a sustained effort to ensure that she obtained enough financial support from Stuart to safeguard her future. Hargrave summed up not only these Gentlemen's respect for Mary in a letter to Nicol Finlayson in 1838, but also his unaltered belief that Mary was still a prime marital choice:

> I cannot help admiring the spirit of my old friend Mary in her resolution of separating herself from Old Aesop—when she found that he haggled at the Noon Matrimonial.—In that he was a fool—for with all her slips aside in this land,—she was every way worthy of having this justice done her by him.—I know not who told me that she had gone back from Stomness to England to see her Brother in Northumberland but upon the information I was induced to send to London, to her care of Gov. Simpson all the property she had remaining at this Factory.—With the little money she possesses I

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[184] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1447, Nicol Finlayson to James Hargrave, Stromness, 14 June 1838.

> have no doubt that she will catch a much better...match among my old neighbors the Northumbrians.—[185]

Mary Taylor's story is an excellent reminder of the fact that all social codes, including gender, are subject to the mitigating influence of face-to-face relationships.

By examining the changing structure of male-female fur trade relationships between 1823 and 1850, it becomes clear that middle-class nineteenth-century British gender beliefs were brought to the Country by young Gentlemen and gradually replaced earlier definitions of femininity. While the presence of male-female relationships in the Country during the eighteenth century indicates that Indian and white gender systems contained enough similarities to allow these alliances to occur, the redefinition of femininity which occurred in Britain as a result of the Enlightenment caused significant changes in the nineteenth-century interpretation of gender. Hargrave's correspondence shows that these new beliefs were present in the Country by the 1820s and that they became increasingly important as they were disseminated through the Correspondence's male network. By the 1830s, these new beliefs had rigidified into a tightly constrained female gender role that listed chastity as the dominant female virtue. After a scandal-ridden decade, references to women and male-female relationships decrease in the 1840s, implying that fur trade society had largely come to terms with the new definition of femininity and its affiliation with class.

The consolidation and expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company after the 1821 merger led to the end of the survival period for frontier fur trade society. The importance of an Indian power base in fur trade affairs was

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185 NAC MG19, A. 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 14, James Hargrave to Nicol Finlayson. York Factory, 10 December 1838.

gradually eroded and as Indian-White relations deteriorated, British gender beliefs were increasingly implemented to judge all women and British social institutions began to become more important. As a result, by the middle of the century the institution of country marriage had largely disappeared, Indian women were no longer considered appropriate mates for Company Gentlemen, and successful mixed-blood women had learned to conform to the new definition of femininity based on middle-class British gender beliefs. Once the Company's economic success and the traders' personal survival had become less problematical, and transportation and communication systems had improved, the Gentlemen began to rebuild fur trade society in the image of its parent society, nineteenth-century Britain. In doing so, they applied the contemporary interpretation of gender to fur trade society in an effort to reduce its 'barbarous' qualities and hasten its 'civilisation.'

The adoption of increasingly stringent female gender roles was also closely associated with the development of class sentiment among the Gentlemen themselves. These men identified closely with the rising middle class in Britain and aspired to class membership in spite of their separation from the home society. Consequently, the adherence of their womenfolk to the attitudes, customs, and behaviours which identified middle-class British women became of primary importance in determining the family's social status. Thus, women—Indian, mixed blood, or white—who were not able to meet these requirements were equated with the lower classes and often denigrated. Indian women who operated out of a system of Indian gender beliefs suffered the most at the implementation of this new system. The Correspondence indicates that it was Indian women's perception of gender, especially their interpretation of chastity, and not their racial differences

which caused the most problems. However, the sympathetic treatment of the appealing but unchaste mixed-blood woman Mary Taylor indicates that even the most stringent requirements of this belief system could be set aside given the appropriate intervening personal variables.

CHAPTER 4

REDEFINING MASCULINITY:
Unequal Power Relationships

In spite of everything that has been said about the importance of women's economic and personal contributions to the fur trade and fur trade society, it is impossible to deny the fact that the fur trade was essentially a male world. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Hudson's Bay Company came to dominate this world. The commercial mandates of the Company and its hierarchical organisational framework created a powerful and tightly-structured commercial enterprise operated by well-educated and highly-literate British men stationed at widely-separated and isolated posts. While these men were not entirely cut off from contact with women, their situations certainly limited their contact with women from their peer groups. In addition, the overwhelmingly male nature of the Company and the fur trade emphasised the importance of male-male over male-female relationships.[186] Surrounded as they often were by individuals who did not share their cultural background or level of education, the Hargrave Correspondence indicates that James Hargrave and his colleagues would have recognised the feelings that prompted a young British bureaucrat in India to write, "it is useless to pretend our life was a normal one. Ours was a

[186] In the context of this thesis, male-male relationships are friendships and relationships of patronage and clientage which took place between heterosexual men; homosexual relationships have not been included. While a study of homosexual relationships and the operation of homosexuality in the fur trade would yield interesting insights and provide a basis of comparative study for imperial historians such as Ronald Hyam, the portion of the Hargrave Correspondence used in this study provides no evidence of homosexuality. Hargrave and his correspondents appear to have all been heterosexual men whose sometimes sentimental male friendships are reflective more of the period's definition of masculinity than of homosexuality.

one-sexed society, with the women hanging on to the edges...."[187] Although he was writing in the 1930s, this aspect of his colonial experience was in many ways unchanged from what had been experienced by men like Hargrave one hundred years earlier. While it is possible to argue that any society in any place or time is a one-sexed society (save perhaps that of the late twentieth century in a few locations), it is especially true of life in the fur trade until at least the middle of the nineteenth century.

As the previous chapter has shown, the officers who manned Hudson's Bay Company posts in the first half of the nineteenth century brought their gender beliefs with them to the Country. While historians have studied the changing role of women in fur trade society, they have often neglected to apply the same type of critical analysis to men. Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen's gender beliefs were not limited to women; as men, their understanding of masculinity and the intricacies of male-male relationships was even more deeply embedded in their characters. Historians need to be reminded that gender is a complex system and that societal interpretations of masculinity and femininity are never fixed or isolated. Instead, they are conjoined and under continuous re-interpretation. At any point in history, therefore, the concept of masculinity is part of an ever-changing process which creates an image of maleness from an understanding of gender that ascribes male character traits and defines male gender roles in relation to female character traits and female gender roles;[188] hence, the changes which affected women in fur trade society in the first half of the nineteenth century

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[187] John Masters, ***Bugles and a Tiger***, (London, 1956), p. 153.

[188] Brittan, pp. 1,3.

must have also been accompanied by corresponding changes in the definition of masculinity and male-male relationships.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, British officers in the Hudson's Bay Company had adopted the increasingly rigid middle-class British definition of masculinity. Respectability, steadiness, industriousness, thriftiness, self-control, and seriousness of character were considered the ideal male traits and men who did not exhibit these characteristics were assigned negative female traits and inferior positions in fur trade society. Since neither Indian nor mixed-blood[189] men's definitions of masculinity conformed to this British model, the application of these gender-based beliefs, at a time when power in fur trade society was shifting into the hands of increasingly class-conscious British men, was instrumental in creating the stereotypes of Indian and mixed-blood men which still exist in Canada today. An examination of the Hargrave Correspondence in the first half of the nineteenth century traces the officers' growing acceptance of this stricter definition of masculinity through their increasingly negative characterisations of Indian and mixed-blood men and the establishment of permanently unequal power relationships between the groups.

Unequal power relationships between white males in the fur trade are also worthy of study; however, these relationships have not been included in this thesis for a number of reasons. The primary reason for this exclusion is a desire to eliminate an element of repetition. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, lower-class white men appear to have defined masculinity in a way which was not dissimilar from that of Indian and half-

[189] The generic term *mixed blood* will be used to indicate English as well as French half-breeds. This has been done to simplify matters, as the documents are not consistent in categorising these men. Indeed, mixed-blood men are often referred to as English or French half-breeds, while the French half-breeds are also often designated as Canadians.

breed men; consequently, they were viewed by middle-class men as inherently flawed and ascribed negative female traits. The Gentlemen brought this understanding of lower-class masculinity with them to the fur trade and used the same gender-based evaluation process to judge their white servants, as well as the Indian and half-breed men with whom they came in contact. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the similarities between these groups was taken for granted, even in the British popular press. For instance, in an attempt to explain why some Hudson's Bay Company servants went native, a writer for the ***Edinburgh Review*** noted that fundamental character flaws drew these white men to the natives:

> The condition of a labourer in the lowest rank of society, (to which it is probable that these renegades belonged), is scarcely superior, in most civilized societies, to the ordinary life of a savage. Where the character is fundamentally licentious besides, the mere freedom from controul (sic) will make amends for many hardships; and the degree of favour and consideration in which such a convert would probably be held, would be a new motive for the transition.[190]

The equation of lower-class white men and Indian and mixed-blood men is also indicated in the Correspondence, but Hargrave and his companions make few direct references to white servants. While Orkneymen are occasionally specified and praised for their careful steadiness, Canadians are described in exactly the same terms as mixed bloods; moreover, there is no care taken to differentiate between half-breed Canadians and French Canadians. Given the scarcity of information about white servants and the impossibility of trying to establish the ethnicity of often unnamed

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190 [A review of] Alexander Mackenzie, "Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Lawrence through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in the years 1789 and 1793: With a Preliminary Account of the Fur Trade," in ***The Edinburgh Review***, Article XXII, vol. 1 2nd ed. (October–January, 1803): 146-147.

Canadians, this study focuses on the unequal power relationships which the Gentlemen themselves felt merited discussion—those involving the Indian and half-breed men.

The majority of historians who have studied masculinity in Britain during the nineteenth century have chosen to concentrate on readily visible individuals and events after 1850. The influence of Thomas Arnold, Coventry Patmore, and Lord Tennyson, as well as the development of muscular Christianity and the increasing militarism of the public schools at the turn of the twentieth century are all significant developments; however, the roots of these changes can be found in modifications to the definition of masculinity which took place as a result of a combination of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century economic, political, and social factors.[191] Men like James Hargrave, who grew up in the early years of the nineteenth century, were part of a society that was still dealing with the socio-political changes brought about by the American and French revolutions, the socio-economic changes of industrialisation and the agrarian revolution, and the effects of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.[192] By the middle of the century, higher levels of education, growing evangelicalism, and an upsurge in class consciousness all contributed to the creation of an increasingly strict interpretation of respectable middle-class masculinity.

Historical interpretations of gender have always assigned positive character traits and active gender roles to men; however, definitions of

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191 Michael Brander, ***The Victorian Gentleman***, (London: Gordon Cremonesi, 1975); Carol Christ, "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House," in ***A Widening Sphere***, Martha Vicinus, ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp.146-162; and Hyam, "Empire and Sexual Opportunity," and ***Empire and Sexuality***. For a general introduction to English manners and thus some information about masculinity prior to 1850, see Maurice J. Quinlan, ***Victorian Prelude: A History of English Manners, 1700-1830***, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1965).

192 Thomson, p. 33.

masculinity are not fixed, but vary among cultures, races, and socio-economic classes. The prevailing definition of masculinity in any society at any point in time is that which belongs to the group of men that possesses the most power. This group appropriates the society's most highly valued masculine traits and activities, and assigns fewer desirable character traits to groups with less power. Those male groups which are closest to the group in power are endowed with a significant number of positive traits. Male groups that are perceived to be unimportant or powerless are usually assigned fewer positive characteristics; instead, their lowly position in society is linked to their questionable masculinity and they are often characterised as possessing a combination of negative female traits.

In pre-industrial Britain, the masculine ideal arose in the upper class. When the middle class emerged, it strove to separate itself from the lower classes; consequently, the middle-class definition of masculinity was based on the upper-class model and then modified to reflect the reality of an increasingly commercial and regulated world. The serious and constrained middle-class definition which emerged in the late eighteenth century took on increasing importance in the first half of the nineteenth century as the middle class gained power.

Differences between the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century definitions of masculinity reflect the combined effects of evangelicalism and industrialisation. While the traditional gender beliefs which formed the foundation of the male gender role in both centuries changed in degree rather than essence, eighteenth-century gentlemen had less constraints upon their behaviour. Public liaisons, heavy drinking, profanity, obscenity, and participation in violent sports were all societally condoned behaviours for

gentlemen at the beginning of the eighteenth century. By the middle of the nineteenth century, these behaviours were no longer considered publicly acceptable for respectable gentlemen and were re-assigned downwards to the 'naturally vicious' masses.[193] The evangelical revivals at the beginning and end of the eighteenth century were partially responsible for this change. Although many men's actual religious sentiments may have been less than fervent, the pervasive effects of religion as a societal force must be taken into account.[194] As religion took on a more prominent place in British society, levels of public conformity to religious models of conduct rose. Social sanctions appeared against undesirable behaviours and codes of Christian and gentlemanly conduct took their place.[195]

In addition to these religious revivals, and at least partially influenced by them, was the increased emphasis placed on domesticity from the mid-1700s onwards. Influential writers such as Drs. Fordyce and Blair stressed the importance of good family life and advised men to view marriage as a means of establishing friendships which combined true love and human sensibility. The twin ideals of the happy home and the happy family took on new importance, as the private sphere came to represent sanctuary for men whose commercial affairs brought them face-to-face with the anomie caused by industrialisation and change.[196]

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[193] Quinlan, pp. 256-265.

[194] James Hargrave and his compatriots are good examples of the pervasiveness of religious beliefs. While Hargrave's father appears to be genuinely religious and Hargrave himself appears to place a good deal of stock in the necessity of converting the natives for the good of their souls, he is certainly not a devout man. Although his letters to clergymen are carefully phrased to include a modicum of appropriate religious conversation, his letters to his colleagues often gently poke fun at the 'black robes.'

[195] Quinlan, pp. 108-119; 256.

[196] Dwyer, "The Symphony of Sympathy: Late Eighteenth Century Scottish Reflections on Private and Domestic Life," in ***Virtuous Discourse***, pp. 95-116. See also Blumen, pp. 7-8. Blumen argues that gender and power are directly related. In her analysis, gender roles are at their most rigid whenever the power group feels that its basis of power is threatened by

As a result of these factors, the middle-class definition of masculinity which emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century encompassed traditional and contemporary beliefs about masculinity. Nineteenth-century men were still expected to be bold, aggressive, brave, trustworthy, chivalrous, courteous, and rational; however, steadiness, industriousness, thriftiness, self-control, and seriousness of character all gained new importance as British society entered the age of industrial capitalism. By the middle of the nineteenth century, these traits had combined to form an umbrella of respectability which sheltered the beaver-hatted ideal of middle-class masculinity. In the course of less than one hundred years, the dandified rake with his flamboyant clothing and devil-take-all attitude had made way for the frock-coated accountant and family man.[197]

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external forces. In order to maintain at least a semblance of control over less powerful groups, the power group scrambles to perpetuate its authority by manipulating the social institutions under its control. Manipulation of the law and the army, as well as social, economic, and political policies help slow or even stop changes which threaten the status quo. When this analysis is applied to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British society, it provides some explanation for the increasing rigidity of gender roles for both sexes, as well as the connections between gender and class that are so noticeable when studying Victorian Britain. While the changes affecting British society were considered to be direct threats to the social structure by some individuals and groups, they seem to have created a general sense of uncertainty and unease about the future for many others. In the public sphere, these sentiments were reflected in diverging gender roles for the middle- and working-classes, rapid increases in the number of crimes punishable by death, and a growing fear of mass violence. In the private sphere, these fears may have been allayed by the adoption of gender roles which reinforced traditional male-female gender beliefs and the idealisation of the home as a sanctuary. In a world where power structures were changing, and growth and change may have appeared inevitable, the rigidification of gender beliefs may have been necessary to grant men an arena in which their power was still assured.

197 While these two easily recognisable figures can be used to symbolise the changes in the definition of masculinity which occurred during this period, obviously not all individuals were rakes or became accountants; however, the dominance of middle-class men's fashions, attitudes towards sexuality, and aversion to physical combat reflect the changing power structure in Britain. The severity of the actions taken against individuals such as Oscar Wilde, who rebelled against the system in the late nineteenth century, only serve to emphasise the zeal with which the middle-class model of masculinity was taken up by the men in the society. Scholars who wish to address this subject in more detail may find that studies of male attitudes towards fashion, aggression, and homosexuality might yield significant insights.

This new definition of masculinity gained immediate popularity, as it was equated with progress and a higher level of civilisation. As middle-class men strove for upward mobility, the violence and vulgarity of earlier centuries came to be associated with barbarism; consequently, they believed that the male character traits enshrined in their new model of masculinity were representative of those found in all 'superior' civilisations. Consequently, both the lower-class British and colonial groups that did not display these desirable character traits were assumed to be less than civilised and in need of guidance from middle-class British men. While this view of masculinity carried with it a certain self-satisfied smugness, it was quickly adopted by British men. As early as 1817, an author in ***Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*** eulogised Francis Horner, Esq. as a man who had exemplified the middle-class ideal in his character and life. As a public man, Horner had manifested all the desirable public virtues:

> a combination almost without parallel,—of every virtue, and every acquirement, which can dignify and adorn the character of a public man;—a powerful understanding,—various and profound knowledge,—a sound and penetrating judgment,—original and enlightened views,—a correct and elegant taste,—an impressive yet modest eloquence,—a fervent but chastened zeal,—never-failing discretion,—a high and independent feeling,—and, above all, a most unimpeachable honour.[198]

As a private man, this paragon of manliness had also exemplified all of the superior private virtues:

> Dutiful, affectionate, and social; gentle, cheerful, and unassuming; full of kindness and full of charity; he was the joy and pride of his family, dear to every friend, and a perfect example of goodness in all the relations of domestic life.[199]

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198 "Memoir of the Late Francis Horner, Esq. M.P.," ***Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.***, no. 1 vol. 1 (April 1817): 3.

199 ***Ibid.***

Middle-class men were not the only ones affected by the adoption of this new definition of masculinity; adolescent and lower-class males were also affected. These new beliefs about masculinity coincided with the identification of adolescence as a peculiar developmental stage between childhood and full adulthood. As with the new interpretation of femininity, these beliefs emerged out of the debates among late eighteenth-century Scottish moralists and educators and then spread to the rest of Britain before becoming widely accepted in America. These men identified adolescent males as incomplete men; thus, while youths were believed to possess some masculine traits because of their sexuality, they were also assigned feminine traits because of their age and unfinished status as men.

Moralists identified adolescence as particularly important to the physical, intellectual, and emotional development of young men. They also believed it was a period fraught with danger. Youths were believed to be passionate, sympathetic, trusting, pliant, and highly impressionable. While these feminine traits were believed to make young men educable, they were also believed to make them as emotionally, intellectually, physically, and morally frail as women. Since their characters were unformed, it was believed that giving in to temptation could lead to corruption that could ruin a young man's character for life. Unlike women, however, youths could pass through their personal Charybdis and emerge as respectable, responsible adults, as long as they had been carefully educated in moral and religious principles and guided by men of unimpeachable characters. In order to do this, they had to first accept their subordinate position in society and then learn to control their emotions, harness their intellectual capabilities, rein in their appetites, and withstand temptations. As a result, programs of total

moral education and delayed entrance into manhood were advocated as the only safe means of guiding young men through this dangerous period of their lives.[200]

Lower-class men were also affected negatively by the adoption of the new model of masculinity, for it employed gender-based character traits to emphasise and rationalise the divergence of the classes. Groups that were socially unimportant and powerless were presumed to be lacking the necessary male traits for success. Consequently, lower-class men were primarily viewed as possessing more female than male traits. In the eyes of the middle and upper classes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these men were presumed to be naturally intemperate, immoderate, and unreliable, as well as morally frail and continuously lustful.[201] Even

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[200] Dwyer, "The Construction of Adolescence in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland," in ***Virtuous Discourse***, pp. 72-94. See also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Davy Crockett as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality, and Inversion in Victorian America," in ***Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America***, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 90-108. Smith-Rosenberg identifies two views of adolescent masculinity in Victorian America. In the view discussed above, young men were presumed to be frail and continually tempted by sexual urges which had to be resisted. As the body was viewed as a closed energy system, anything which wastefully expended the body's limited resources was a potential threat to the overall health and well-being of the individual; consequently, masturbation, illicit sex, and early marriage were all dangers which had to be resisted. In order for young men to enter manhood unharmed, they had to conform to the patriarchal nature of society. The second view of the adolescent male that Smith-Rosenberg identifies is that of the Davy Crockett figure—wild, untamed, actively sexual, and unashamedly progressive. Both of these images of adolescent masculinity reached their peak popularity in America between 1830 and 1850—at the same time that the American middle class was consolidating its power and establishing itself as the country's dominant class.

[201] Weeks, pp. 57-68. See also "On the Constitution and Moral Effects of Banks for the Savings of Industry," ***Blackwoods***, no. I vol. I (April 1817): 17; "The Silent Member," ***Blackwoods***, no. CLXIX vol. XXVIII (August 1830): 228. These two articles are simply representative samplings of typical discussions about the effects of social change on the lower classes. Savings banks were suggested as means of improving character by increasing "the industry, the frugality, the foresight, and the comparative independence, of the lower classes" (p. 17); thus, implying that few working-class men possessed enough of these positive male traits to even realise their situations. In the second article, the author discusses the possible ramifications of loosening the restrictions on divorce and making it more accessible for the "poorer classes." His inevitable conclusion was that easier access would only lead to more divorces, due to "the undeniably greater immorality and moral coarseness of the poorer classes" (p. 228).

when they merited praise, lower-class men were regularly commended for possessing character traits that were traditionally associated with women; for instance, docility, piety, obedience, subservience, and taciturnity.

This complex and changing definition of masculinity formed part of the intangible baggage that Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen brought to fur trade society. While these beliefs affected their relationships with all men in fur trade society, they were the most influential in establishing the basis for discrimination against Indian and mixed-blood men and structuring long-lasting and unequal power relationships with them. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Company's success in the fur trade prior to 1821 was largely dependent on the Gentlemen's ability to establish successful personal and trading alliances with surrounding Indian tribes. While relationships with native women played a vital role in establishing these early alliances, the success of the commercial venture rested primarily on the Gentlemen's ability to work with Indian men. During this period, traders had to cope with commercial competition, numerical inferiority, economic instability, and extreme frontier conditions—all of which encouraged the development of positive British–Indian working relationships. In spite of this, the Gentlemen's evaluations of Indian men tended to be generally negative.

Although thorough comparative studies of British and Indian male gender roles have not yet been done, a brief examination of fur trade documents prior to 1821 suggests that Indian men were consistently judged according to British gender beliefs and found lacking. While some individual Indians were praised and accepted as equals in the eighteenth century, this does not appear to have occurred in the nineteenth century. In both centuries, groups of Indians were consistently viewed as inferior or

incomplete men and were subsequently assigned female character traits and a low social rank.[202] While growing differences between British and Indian gender beliefs appear to have laid at the bottom of the widening gap between the two groups and hastened the establishment of negative stereotypes, there may have been other factors that also contributed to the increasingly negative interpretation of Indian masculinity in fur trade society. On a psychological level, male-male relationships are always extremely intricate and competitive, involving a large number of subtle nuances. In fur trade society, this element of competition between British and Indian men—for women and for power—may have been exacerbated by the numeric inferiority of the British and undoubtedly encouraged the Gentlemen to stress the differences between themselves and the native men. Thus, individual Indian men were occasionally able to bridge this gap through face-to-face relationships with British officers, but the British tendency to group Indians together as a faceless and inferior group did little to dispel gender-based myths.

In the eighteenth century, there were still enough similarities between British and Indian gender beliefs to allow for relatively equal relationships between British officers and Indian men who held power positions in the fur trade. The ideal eighteenth-century man was 'a man's man'—one who lived

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[202] For the purpose of this chapter, the terms *Indian* and *half-breed* must be understood to refer to mainly to Indian and half-breed men. This usage is common in the majority of the fur trade documents used in this thesis, and especially in the Hargrave Correspondence. Although these terms are sometimes used as mass nouns which include both sexes, they are not commonly used to describe women. When women are being discussed or are present, they are generally acknowledged as women. This may be because the men who created the documents considered women's sexuality more important than their ethnicity; or, it may reflect the correspondence between British and Indian female gender roles during this period. In the case of Indian and mixed-blood men, Gentlemen appear to employ these terms in order to dissociate themselves from the natives of the Country. Even so, this dissociation rests primarily on gender-based differences.

hard, played hard, and combined elegance with daring. Indian men often had no problem fulfilling these requirements. Their physical appearance, as well as their ability to combine fortitude with cheerfulness in the face of hardship, allowed them to fit into this model and often won them the approval of early traders. In 1743, James Isham noted that Indians were "much the Nature of a sett *(sic)* of people Call'd Gppseys *(sic)*"[203] and remarked positively that "the men are for the most part tall and thin straight & Clean Lim'd Large bon'd and full breas'ted *(sic)*, their *(sic)* is Very few Crooked or Deform'd persons amongst them...."[204] Another eighteenth-century Hudson's Bay Company Gentleman, Samuel Hearne, spent the majority of his time in Indian Country travelling with assorted groups of Indians. While Hearne's evaluation of Indians was sometimes scathing, his journeys with the Northern Indians left him awed by their ability to go without food for extended periods of time and still remain merry.[205]

British and Indian definitions of masculinity shared these positive male traits, but the eighteenth-century officers quickly judged Indian men to be lacking other important attributes of masculinity. While aggressiveness, boldness, and courage formed an important trinity of masculine virtues, British and Indian gender systems differed in the expression of these behaviours. Ethnocentricity appears to have left the Gentlemen unable to understand the cultural differences that elicited unfamiliar Indian interpretations of these qualities. As a result, Indian men were often portrayed as cowards or bullies. The Gentlemen complained that Indian men subjugated their wives by assuming "the same authority over them that the

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203 HBCA E2/1, fo. 64d.
204 HBCA E2/1, fo. 51.
205 Hearne, p. 70.

master of a family in Europe usually does over his domestic servants;"[206] that they were prone to acts of unmitigated violence and cruelty towards weaker or unprotected individuals and groups; and that they were "Very timerious *(sic)* and fearfull *(sic)*"[207] when dealing with groups that were their 'superiors'.

Cowardice is a negative female trait, but it was not the only one attributed to Indian men. Among other feminine flaws, they were commonly perceived to be cunning, sly, lazy, jealous, mendacious, covetous, vain, ungrateful, and superstitious.[208] Like women and members of the lower classes, they were presumed to be naturally flawed, morally weak, unable to control their appetites, and prone to flattery.[209] When Indians were praised, it was for manifesting the same characteristics as 'good' women or servants:

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[206] ***Ibid.***, p. 310.

[207] HBCA E2/1, fo. 62d. See also John Long, ***Voyages and Travels in the Years 1768-1788***, Milo Milton Quaife, ed., (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly & Sons Co., 1922), pp. 10-11, 38-40. Long was an English contemporary of Hearne's who was employed by the North West Company and whose understanding of Indian character was also clearly influenced by his gender beliefs. Long's evaluation of Indians as "Nature in her most degenerate state," reflected his understanding of Indians as naturally inferior, flawed, and incomplete. However, he was optimistic that they could be improved by time, conversion, and careful guidance from superior whites: "And it is to be expected, and certainly most ardently to be wished, that the savage temper among them may in time be more effectually subdued, their natural impetuosity softened, and restrained, and their minds weaned from their unhappy attachment to the use of strong liquors." (pp. 10-11) Long's optimism was based on another common belief. Since Indian men's extensive knowledge of nature showed that they were not unintelligent, there was a growing belief that Indians "possess strong, natural abilities, and are even capable of receiving improvement from the pursuits of learning." (p. 38) By the logical extrapolation of this line of thought, many eighteenth-century fur traders believed that Indians would only require comprehensive moral educations in order to become civilised men.

[208] ***Ibid.*** See also ***Idem.***, fos. 58-60 and Hearne, pp. 21, 22, 25, 42-43, 51, 306-309. In the nineteenth century, the Indians' lack of cleanliness was also added to this list of flaws. While eighteenth-century Gentlemen occasionally commented on the the dirtiness of Indians, British hygiene at this time also left something to be desired. Officers such as Chief Factor Joseph Colen were so busy trying to cajole and threaten their own men into washing their hands and faces at least once a week, in an effort to inhibit the spread of disease, that they had little time to devote to Indian hygiene. However, once dirt was linked to vice and the lower classes in the nineteenth century, the Indians' lack of cleanliness was seen as another indicator of their moral failings. HBCA B239/a/95 fo. 18d, 18 February 1793.

[209] HBCA B239/a/95, York Factory Post Journal 1792-93 (Joseph Colen), 4 May 1793 and 7 August 1793; Hearne, pp 21-25, 309.

passivity, docility, obedience, and subordination.[210] While Gentlemen occasionally disagreed on the proportions of flattery and discipline necessary to obtain these desired behaviours from different groups of Indians, they agreed that the two ingredients were absolutely essential. Isham believed that "good usage and civility agrees well with these Natives,—if they grow obst./bilious *(sic)*, a Little correction; then sweetening makes them pliant."[211] Hearne—in one of his more negative moods—disagreed. He felt that Indians were so different from the rest of mankind that even the Northern Indians would not benefit from 'civilised' treatment:

> harsh usage seems to agree better with the generality of them particularly the lower class, than mild treatment; for if the least respect be shown them, it makes them intolerably indolent...Experience has convinced me, that by keeping a Northern Indian at a distance, he may be made serviceable both to himself and the Company; but by giving him the least indulgence at the Factory, he will grow indolent, inactive, and troublesome....[212]

Hearne's comments exemplify the growing importance of industriousness as a primary masculine trait, but they also reflect the increased use of gender beliefs as signifiers of class. The recommendations that he made about the treatment of native men coincided with contemporary British ideas about the treatment of servants and other members of the lower classes.

In spite of these negative evaluations, some individual Indian men possessed the requisite character traits to form friendships with the British officers. Samuel Hearne formed a lifelong friendship with the Indian leader, Matonabbee. In Hearne's eulogy for his old friend and guide, he described Matonabbee as he would have described one of his peers. Matonabbee had

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210 *Idem.*, 3 March 1793, p. 24

211 HBCA E2/1 fo. 52d.

212 Hearne, p. 309.

clearly fulfilled the requirements of Hearne's personal definition of masculinity. Not only had Matonabbee been well-built and good-looking, but according to Hearne, he had also been vivacious, sincere, noble, grave, naturally modest, and sober.[213] His worst fault had been jealousy; however, this flaw appeared unimportant when balanced against his other virtues:[214]

> Notwithstanding his aversion from religion, I have met with few Christians who possessed more good moral qualities, or fewer bad ones.
>
> It is impossible for any man to have been more punctual in the performance of a promise than he was; his scrupulous adherence to truth and honesty would have done honour to the enlightened and devout Christian, while his benevolence and universal humanity to all the human race, according to his abilities and manners of life, could not be exceeded by the most illustrious personage now on record;[215]

Hearne was not the only officer to lose a valued Indian friend during his time in the Country. Chief Factor Joseph Colen expressed similar emotions when he mourned the death by exposure of an old friend. Although unnamed, this Indian man's character had obviously impressed Colen. He mentioned him simply as, "my Companion in my hunting excursions the first year of my being in this country. The kindness with which he treated me & his particular attention to my safety I cannot forget though the man is no more."[216] Hearne's and Colen's abilities to hold negative ideas about Indian men at the same time that they had close Indian friends is indicative of the

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[213] Hudson's Bay records indicate that many of the eighteenth-century officers were heavy drinkers and that drunkenness was by no means unknown among the Gentlemen; however, the Indians' fondness for alcohol exceeded the social sanctions of the eighteenth-century definition of masculinity. As moderation and control became the bywords for respectable nineteenth-century Gentlemen, the Indians' unrestrained use of alcohol was perceived to be symptomatic of their moral failings as men.

[214] *Idem.*, pp. 351-2.

[215] *Idem.*, pp. 350-51.

[216] HBCA B239/a/95 fo. 21d, 5 March, 1793.

way that face-to-face relationships were able to transcend societal myths during this period. While Hearne and Colen may have been unusual men for their time, the isolation and insularity of fur trade society ensured that all eighteenth-century officers had daily dealings with Indian men and knew many of them personally.

Despite individual exceptions such as these, the majority of the evaluations of Indian character that made their way back to Britain and subsequently found their way into the British press were negative. Consequently, young men like James Hargrave and his compatriots who were very literate were undoubtedly aware of at least some of these evaluations by the time that they joined the Hudson's Bay Company in the early nineteenth century. As early as 1803, the author of an ***Edinburgh Review*** article on Alexander Mackenzie's publication, ***Voyages from Montreal***, reflected unfavourably on the state of Indian civilisation:

> those nations [the Indians] have made no sensible progress in civilization or improvement, after an intercourse of little less than two hundred years with the industrious and intelligent colonies of Europe...it appears now to be tolerably certain, that the whole race will be extinct before a single tribe has been reclaimed from the misery and disorders of a barbarous life. Even in the immediate neighbourhood of the colonies, and where every exertion has been made for their improvement, that religious zeal and interested policy could dictate, no sensible progress has been effected.... 'But notwithstanding these advantages,' says Mr. Mackenzie, '...they do not advance towards a state of civilization; but retain their ancient habits, language, and customs, and are becoming every day more depraved, indigent, and insignificant.'... 'that through their

> slothful and dissolute lives, their numbers are in a very perceptible state of diminution.'[217]

These doom-laden prophesies proved incorrect. Indian society did not disintegrate; nor did the Indian people die out. However, neither did the Gentlemen's evaluation of Indian men change for the better as the British definition of masculinity became less flexible in the early nineteenth century.

As the most influential practitioner of the new concept of masculinity in the Country, George Simpson advocated strict social conformity and uniformly applied his gender beliefs to judge all the men with whom he dealt. In order for any man to win Simpson's approval, he had to be 'manly'. In Simpson's world, manliness was a uniquely British trait. It encompassed many characteristics, but as the most important descriptor in his lexicon, it was obviously equated with the kind of moral integrity, dedication to duty, and devotion to work that he felt he possessed. Consequently, Simpson praised only those individual Indian men who sought "to imitate the Whites in everything."[218] He was contemptuous of Indians in general and did not hesitate to assign them negative female traits:

> I have studied their [the Indians'] character with some attention and find them to be a miserable abject race; covetous and selfish to an extreme, full of low cunning, and devoid of every good and generous feeling; their boasted gratitude, sentiments of honor and attachment are all counterfeit, and had they but courage a price would reconcile them to the blackest acts....[219]

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217 "Voyages from Montreal," ***Edinburgh Review***, pp. 146-147. For another example see "Cursory Remarks on Music, Especially on the Sources of the Pleasure Which it Communicates," in ***Blackwood's Edinburgh Review***, no. IV vol. I (July 1817): 343-347. This author makes his opinion of Indian civilisation clear when he notes that "none,...but absolutely barbarous nations are entirely destitute of music. Among the North American Indians, we are informed by Mr. Weld, that nothing resembling poetry or music is to be found."

218 Merk, p. 87.

219 Rich, ed., "Report to Governor Williams," in ***Athabaska***, fo. 53, 30 November 1820, p. 122.

Of all the tribes that Simpson encountered during his early days in the Country, only the Beaver Indians came close to meeting his definition of masculinity:

> The Beaver Indians are naturally of a bold Manly character, quick in resenting injuries, but possessing none of the detestable treachery, which characterises the Chipewyans, nor have they any of their selfish, covetous and avaricious dispositions;[220]

With the Governor of the Company expressing views such as these, and the power base in fur trade society shifting in favor of the British after 1821, it is not surprising to find that Hargrave and his correspondents reflected many of the same beliefs as Simpson. As carriers of British middle-class gender beliefs, this younger generation of Gentlemen appears to have quickly accepted and then expanded the negative evaluations of Indian men formed by previous generations of officers. As young men, they became part of a small, tightly-knit society which had already established its own stereotypes of Indian men. Given this negative foundation and the fact that they brought a definition of masculinity to the Country that was far less tolerant of variation than that of their predecessors, it is not surprising that they judged all Indian men according to their standards and consistently found them lacking.[221] However, another factor also contributed to their negative evaluation of Indian men. After 1821, the Company grew rapidly and transportation and communication systems in the Country improved immensely. While many officers still led isolated lives much like those of

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220 Rich, ed., "Report on Athabaska District," in ***Athabaska***, fo. 22, 18 May 1821, p. 387.

221 It is a mark of the changing nature of fur trade society that Hargrave rose to be Chief Factor although he did not speak any of the native languages. Moreover, unlike earlier traders, Hargrave's work with the Hudson's Bay Company did not always put him into direct contact with Indians; therefore, it is not surprising that his letters contain few personal references to Indian men.

their eighteenth-century counterparts, others like Hargrave existed in a nineteenth-century commercial world where Indian men were stock characters rather than supporting actors. As the century progressed, these nineteenth-century officers had less opportunities to be involved in the types of face-to-face relationships with Indian men that could have helped to break down these barriers.

Although Hargrave had only been been in the Country a few years in 1827, he had already accepted the contemporary stereotypes about Indians. In a letter to his comments to his friend William Lockie, he described them as naturally barbarous, ferocious, and sly. Hargrave explained that those Indians who had been in contact with the Company for any extended period of time had become less violent and had attained "a certain degree of civilization"; however, tribes which were still in their 'natural' state were "treacherous, warlike, & hostile."[222] In order to prove that he was not alone in his negative beliefs, he quoted part of a letter he had received from a friend stationed in the Columbia:

> Does any one wish to view man in his natural state?—let him visit the Columbia,—there he will find a Being so nearly allied to the Brute that his reason is perceptible only in the efforts absolutely necessary for the support of his animal existence—A leaf even does not cover his nakedness,—but there he stands as he was ushered into the world—his Sex exposed to the glare of open day—not a blush upon his front—He is as unconscious of shame as he appears to be ignorant of his own fallen degraded nature.[223]

Since these men had quickly come to the conclusion that Indian men were so far removed from their definitions of masculinity that they were little better

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[222] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 2, James Hargrave to Wm. Lockie, York Factory, 2 August 1827.

[223] *Ibid*. Although I was unable to trace the origin of this letter, the style and vocabulary suggest that it may have been written by George Barnston.

than animals, it is hardly surprising that their relationships with Indian men never approached equality.

In a world where masculinity was increasingly defined according to middle-class British requirements of respectability, conformity, industry, and regulation, the gap between Company Gentlemen and Indian men who acted from a different definition of masculinity widened steadily. The Correspondence indicates that the Gentlemen unquestioningly accepted the assumptions that Indian men were naturally indolent and cowardly, as well as "secret and treacherous And once irritated very sanguinary."[224] Hargrave and his fellow officers appear to have also adopted their ideas about the treatment of Indians from their predecessors. While flattery still appears to have been used as the primary manipulative tool, they also believed that only violent reprisals could counter acts of violence.

Fearing the uncontrollable violence that was supposed to lurk just below the surface of every Indian man, the Gentlemen reacted to acts of Indian violence in the same way that the British middle and upper classes reacted to possible uprisings in the lower classes—savagely. When some Rupert House Indians attacked the post at Hanna Bay and murdered William Corrigal, his family, and seven Indian men, women, and children, Chief Factor John George McTavish immediately sent a group of twelve men out to hunt down the murderers. Once the murderers were caught, they were made into an example to deter other Indians from attempting similar acts. Praise for McTavish's "firm & decisive step"[225] flowed into York Factory from across

[224] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 190, E. Smith to James Hargrave, Ft. Simpson, 27 September 1829; NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 12, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 29 April 1845.

[225] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to Thomas McMurray, York Factory, 17 August 1832.

the Country. Writing from New Caledonia, William Connolly expressed a common sentiment when he asked Hargrave to congratulate McTavish on following a course of action that he felt was long overdue: "The examples which were made of some of the rascals who assisted in Murdering our people have had a wonderful effect & I hope will keep the Natives quiet for some [time] to come."[226] Hargrave agreed with Connolly and gravely informed Ed Smith that "this was a sober lesson of Justice to the ignorant natives around this bay & one felt to have been wanted much, as within my knowledge both fireraising *(sic)* & murder had escaped with impunity."[227]

References to Indians in the Correspondence taper off after 1830. By this time, the Gentlemen appear to have abandoned any vestiges of the eighteenth-century belief that Indians could be readily elevated to 'civilised' British standards. Instead, they appear to have been uniformly of the opinion that Indians were their inferiors and that it would take generations to 'improve' them.[228] By the late 1820s, Hargrave had already concluded that adult Indians' minds were "too narrow" and too much controlled by superstitions to be able to comprehend the complexities of abstract Christian religion; however, as late as the end of the 1830s he was still advocating the establishment of a comprehensive system of Christian education for Indian

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[226] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 210, William Connolly to James Hargrave, New Caledonia, 19 February 1830.

[227] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to E. Smith, York Factory, 5 December 1832.

[228] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to his father, York Factory, 12 November 1830; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to Rev'd. D. Gordon, Buckridge, 28 September 1837. See also Hyam, ***Empire and Sexuality***, pp. 200-217. As previously noted, Hyam believes that British respect for all colonial peoples deteriorated rapidly between 1790 and 1840, and turned into prejudice after the mid-1850s. As changes in the interpretation of masculinity played a significant role in fostering this situation in Indian Country, similar studies in other colonies might shed further light on the influence of gender in colonial affairs.

children in the hope that it would 'elevate' all Indians over time.[229] Throughout this period the Correspondence reflects the declining status of Indians in fur trade society, as references to them become first paternalistic and then discriminatory. As late as 1831, Indians were still described in relatively neutral terms, as "the simple natives;"[230] by 1834, they had become objects of sympathy and were characterised as "the poor creatures...completely at our mercy;"[231] and in 1836, they had slid still further in the Gentlemen's estimation to become "these poor unfortunates."[232] By the 1840s, prejudice was beginning to develop and the Indians were curtly referred to as "the wretched natives."[233]

From 1830 onwards, the Gentlemen appear to have structured their interactions with Indian men after familiar master-servant relationships. During this period Indian men often acted as couriers of information and goods between the posts, and the officers appear to have believed that they could make good servants if carefully monitored. Given the small size of fur trade society, Hargrave and the other officers must surely have known the majority of these Indian men by name, yet their lowly social status was reflected in their anonymity. While much of the mail that the officers sent and received appears to have been carried by Indian men, most of the

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229 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to his father, York Factory, 12 November 1830; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to Rev'd. D. Gordon, Buckridge, 28 September 1837.

230 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Francis Heron, York Factory, 2 July 1831.

231 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 10, James Hargrave to Robert Wilson, York Factory, 10 December 1834.

232 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1176, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 22 February 1836.

233 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 12, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 29 April 1845.

references to these men introduce them simply as "your indians,"[234] or identify them according to their posts—for example, "two Indian lads from Oxford."[235] Like servants, these men were too insignificant to be named, a fact that reflects the growing inequality of British and Indian power relationships during the period.

By 1850, the middle-class definition of masculinity was predominant in fur trade society and had resulted in marginalisation and loss of status for Indian men. As British and Indian gender beliefs diverged in the first half of the century and the British gained power in fur trade society, the British officers increasingly assigned Indian men negative female traits and placed them on a par with the 'naturally' vicious lower classes. Although face-to-face relationships might have mitigated some of the harsher aspects of these evaluations, the Hargrave Correspondence provides little evidence to suggest that Gentlemen had enough personal relations with Indian men by the middle of the century to facilitate this process.

Just as the declining number of references to Indian men in the Correspondence reflected the decreasing power of Indians in fur trade society, the growing number of references to mixed-blood men after 1821 attests to their increasing importance. While there is no doubt that eighteenth-century Gentlemen fathered numerous mixed-blood children during their sojourns in the Country, contemporary references to mixed-blood men are limited. John Foster's observation that the children of these early unions were mostly enculturated in Indian ways suggests that the

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234 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to P. Cunningham, York Factory, 5 June 30.

235 Glazebrook, ed., no. 150, : "Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 13 April 1842," p. 391.

majority of eighteenth-century mixed-blood men would probably have seen themselves as Indian and would have been characterised in that way by Company Gentlemen. Consequently, only those first-generation mixed-blood men who grew up in posts would have had to develop a new set of values that combined Indian and white beliefs.[236] As time passed and sufficient numbers of these men gathered together, they evolved a way of life and a set of beliefs that set them off from both their Indian and white ancestors.

Early references to mixed-blood children were generally positive. In 1743, James Isham remarked that they were "as fine Children as one wou'd Desire to behold,—streight Lim'd, Lively active, and Indeed fair exceeds the true born Indians in all things...."[237] Later in the eighteenth century, Chief Factor Andrew Graham voiced similar sentiments:

> The Englishmen's children by Indian women are fat *(sic)* more sprightly and active than the true born natives; their complexion fairer, light hair and most of them fine blue eyes. These esteem themselves superior to the others, and are always looked upon at the Factories as descendants of our countrymen.[238]

Unfortunately, these positive sentiments did not stand the test of time.

Although mixed-blood men's heritage made them ideally fitted for conducting the fur trade, they were quickly consigned to an inferior role in fur trade society. Officers such as George Simpson held such negative beliefs about mixed-blood men that they appear to have been unable to picture them as anything but a new servant class. As early as 1821, Simpson advocated the

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236 Foster, "Origins," in Thomas, ***Essays***, pp. 75-6.

237 E.E. Rich, ed., ***James Isham's Observations on Hudsons Bay, 1743***, vol. 12, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1949), p. 79.

238 Glyndwr Williams, ed., ***Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay, 1767-91***, vol. xxvii, (London: Hudson Bay Record Society, 1969), p. 145.

continuance of country marriages for the sheer purpose of increasing the number of mixed-blood men who would be attached to the Company by ties of blood. Simpson felt that these kin relationships could then be manipulated in order to ensure that the Company had a set of hunters who could not be readily bought.[239] However, mixed-blood men were not as easy to manipulate as Simpson presumed, and by 1824 he was complaining that their independence and pride, combined with their indolence and unsteadiness, left them unfitted for any work other than voyaging.[240]

Simpson's assumption that mixed-blood men were intrinsically flawed reflected the contemporary evaluation of mixed-blood masculinity. Just as mixed-blood women were considered tainted because of the flaws that they had presumably inherited from their native mothers, mixed-blood men were often assumed to have inherited the worst traits of both ethnic groups. By their very existence, these men incorporated and yet denied their origins; moreover, they stood in the middle of two strong and diverging definitions of masculinity. As such, some mixed-blood men adopted Indian definitions of masculinity and lived out their lives as Indians. For instance, as late as 1850 James Anderson informed Governor Simpson that "the Chipewyans, headed by a half breed *(sic)* named Pishé took up arms this summer against the men composing the R.R. Transport Brigade...."[241] While Pishé was identified as a mixed blood, it is obvious that he was acting as an Indian and was accepted as one by the Chipewyans. Other mixed-blood men adopted

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239 Rich, ed., "Report on Athabaska District," in *Athabaska*, fo. 27, 18 May 1821, pp. 396-7.

240 Carol M. Judd, " 'Mix't Bands of Many Nations': 1821-70," in Judd, *Old Trails*, pp. 127-146.

241 NAC MG19, A, 29, James Anderson to Sir George Simpson, James Anderson Papers, Fort. Chipewyan, 29 October 1850.

British beliefs and moved into British or Canadian society. One of the best examples is George Barnston's mixed-blood son, James. This young man not only succeeded in training as a doctor and specialist in mid-wifery in Edinburgh, but was also a renowned botanist and the first professor of botany at McGill University.[242]

However, not all mixed-blood men chose to identify so strictly with the belief system of one of their parents. The presence of a steadily expanding and increasingly important group of mixed-blood men at Red River in the second quarter of the nineteenth century indicates that these men had begun to see themselves as separate from either of their ancestral groups. In the process of self-identification, they also synthesized a unique definition of masculinity which contained elements of both the Indian and European models.[243]

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242 Suzanne E. Zeller and John H. Noble, "James Barnston," ***Dictionary of Canadian Biography***, vol. viii, Francess G. Halpenny, ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 61-62. The success of James Barnston and other Gentlemen's sons seems to have depended largely on the interest that their fathers placed in their upbringing and education. Many Gentlemen appear to have held the contemporary belief that adolescent males were by nature morally frail and in need of careful supervision. While they believed that their mixed-blood sons' heritage had provided them with more character weaknesses than their white counterparts, they also believed that it was possible to make them into successful men. It must be noted that Barnston, as the son of a well-educated Hudson's Bay Company officer, benefitted from his father's early teaching and his parents' social position. George Barnston made a special effort to ensure that James received the best educational foundation that he could provide, for he felt that James was "a soft boy" who would need to rely on education rather than brawn to be a success. As a result, Barnston resolved to "make a man of him, if I can," and invested time and money in James' future. NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1403, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Martin's Falls, 9 January 1838.

On the other hand, many of the half-breeds who are found in the documents are the children of engagés. Many of these men appear to have been minimally educated at best and the lowly social status of their parents undoubtedly played an important role in their eventaul position in fur trade society. In this case, Pishé's French surname suggests that he may be one of these individuals.

243 Paul Kane, ***Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America***, John W. Garvin ed., Introduction by Laurence J. Burpee, (Toronto: Radisson Society of Canada, 1925), pp. 49, 51. Kane appears to have been intrigued by the mixed-blood men he met on his journeys. After spending some time at Red River in 1846, he commented on the uniqueness of the mixed-blood group there:

> the halfbreeds, a race who, keeping themselves distinct from both Indians and whites, form a tribe of themselves, and, although they have adopted

By the early decades of the nineteenth century, mixed-blood men had been assigned a niche in fur trade society—above the Indians and below the British. Although H.M. Robinson and Alexander Ross were mid-nineteenth-century writers, their pronouncements on the characters of mixed-blood men were based on the same nineteenth-century gender beliefs that had been applied to Indian men. According to Robinson, mixed-blood men were "neither Indian nor white, possess all the craft of one and a fair degree of the intelligence of the other."[244] Ross felt that the majority of mixed-blood men were actually more Indian than white in character; as a result, he believed that they possessed all of the Indians' negative traits—only intensified:

> as they grow up resemble almost in every respect the pure Indian, with this difference, that they are more designing, more daring, and more dissolute. They are indolent, thoughtless, and improvident, licentious in their habits, unrestrained in their desires, sullen in their dispositions, proud, restless, clannish, and fond of flattery. They alternately associate with the whites and the Indians, and thereby become falsely enlightened, acquiring all the bad qualities of both.[245]

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some of the customs and manners of the French voyageurs, are much more attached to the wild and savage manners of the Redman. (p. 49)

While Kane felt that mixed-blood men were "capable of enduring the greatest hardships and fatigues," he also noted that, like their Indian ancestors, they preferred "the more exciting pleasures of the chase" to the mundane reality of farming. (p. 51)

[244] H.M. Robinson, ***The Great Fur Land, or Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory***, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1882), p. 48.

[245] Alexander Ross, ***The Fur Hunters of the Far West***, Milo Milton Quaife, ed., (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1924), p. 289. Like most other nineteenth-century writers, when Ross refers to 'half-breeds', he is clearly speaking only of mixed-blood males. In spite of Ross' negative comments about mixed-blood men's masculinity, he had mixed-blood sons who did not evince these failings. Ross expressed another common fur trade belief when he noted that mixed-blood sons could be saved from these failings if they were properly "instructed in the principles of religion and morality." (p. 290) in their youth. While contemporary gender beliefs defined adolescence as a particularly dangerous period for all youths, mixed-blood youths were presumed to be doubly at danger. Not only did they have to learn to resist the common temptations which threatened to ruin all men's characters, but it was also believed that they had to develop enough self-discipline to resist those inherited character flaws which were always working to sabotage their advancement.

This daunting list of negative characteristics creates an image of mixed-blood men that is the antithesis of the definition of masculinity held by Hargrave and his correspondents.

An examination of the Correspondence indicates that references to mixed-blood men are limited and innocuous in the 1820s when the mixed-blood self-identification process was in its early stages and the middle-class definition of masculinity was just beginning to be implemented in fur trade society. However, references to mixed-blood men multiply and become increasingly negative after 1830. There may be a number of reasons for this change in sentiment. During this period, the mixed-blood population at Red River gained enough cohesion to be perceived by the Gentlemen as a pressure group that increasingly threatened the Company monopoly and its continued commercial success. This occurrence also happened to coincide with the Gentlemen's rising sense of class consciousness and their use of the British middle-class definition of masculinity as a means of self-identification. Consequently, the majority of the Gentlemen appear to have shared Robinson's and Ross' views of mixed-blood failings in the second quarter of the century.

Unsteadiness, improvidence, indolence, independence, and a tendency to lawlessness and violence were the primary character traits associated with mixed-blood men by Hargrave and his fellow officers. As a relatively tolerant and flexible man for his time, Hargrave formed a friendship with Cuthbert Grant during his sojourn at Red River in the 1820s. Although he carried on a desultory correspondence with Grant for several years thereafter, Hargrave was soon warned by John Siveright not to place high expectations on friendship with a mixed-blood man. Siveright had also

corresponded with Grant and believed that he knew "none who possessed more personal bravery & determined resolution in time of danger,"[246] but he felt that the essential unsteadiness of Grant's character would preclude the formation of a long-term friendship: "Friendship or real regard for any one beyond the moment I do not think is in his nature or in that of many of his Countrymen...."[247] By the mid-1830s, Hargrave's correspondence with Grant appears to have ceased and his letters to his colleagues indicate that as he had risen to a position of responsibility in the Company, he had also adopted contemporary beliefs about mixed-blood men. Thus, as he increasingly judged the men he worked with according to their steadiness, carefulness, and trustworthiness, his opinion of mixed-blood men had gradually fallen. Although Hargrave never viewed mixed-blood men in the same anonymous light as Indians, his letters leave no doubt that he believed that their abilities were limited by their character flaws and that the majority of them would never be able to rise above the position of servants who needed continuous supervision. Consequently, when Donald Ross informed him of the problems that the private freighters had experienced in 1835, he sympathised, but commented that they had brought most of their trouble on themselves by employing mixed-blood men and not supervising them carefully: "They never will manage their affairs properly till they send with their boats an active & pushing superintendent *(sic)*; for when half breeds get among women & out of reach of Masters, reflection is the last of their attributes."[248]

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[246] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 89, J. Siveright to James Hargrave, Ft. Coulonge, 27 April 1826.

[247] *Ibid.*

[248] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 10, James Hargrave to Donald Ross, York Factory, 1 March 1835.

The unsteadiness of mixed-blood men was closely linked to their legendary improvidence and indolence. As thrift and self-control became increasingly important qualities for Gentlemen in fur trade society, the mixed-bloods' tendency to follow the Indian philosophy of living for the day was met with growing contempt. As early as 1833, Thomas Simpson remarked caustically to James Hargrave that the fur trade provided such easy money for the inhabitants of Red River that "the indolent mass of which the great mass of the population is composed, renders it next to impossible to rouse them into energy."[249] Although Thomas Simpson's sarcastic remarks about the mixed-blood community at Red River often reflected his personal prejudices against mixed-blood men, these comments taken from another letter to Hargrave in 1835 provide an insight into pervasive societal beliefs:

> I am glad to say the Colony is now perfectly healthy, though not over quiet; and the Halfbreeds, with their usual wretched improvidence, rioted and wasted, the abundant provisions in the Fall and early part of the winter, and are now subsisting on beaten grain, and a few tough Buffalo Bulls from the plains; it is hopeless to make any thing of such fellows, save Hewers of wood and Carriers of water, which is all the 'brutes' (as Donald would say) are good for.[250]

Even when mixed-blood men began to play a significant role in the fur trade in the 1840s, Gentlemen such as Donald Ross were unable to interpret their activity in any way save as a means of maintaining their Indian-inherited taste for indolence and feeding their vanity: "that is just what suits these fellows above all things it is that sort of half idle roving life in which they

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[249] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 669, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 13 December 1833.

[250] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 986, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 27 February 1835.

delight, and which enables them to appear among the Indians as men of some consequence...and more especially cutting a shine among the *Indian ladies*."[251]

While unsteadiness, indolence, and improvidence were serious character flaws for men who were being judged against the middle-class definition of masculinity, it was mixed-blood men's independence and their tendency towards violent behaviour that made the Gentlemen see them as a threat to the fabric of fur trade society. In their dealings with mixed-blood men, the Gentlemen had quickly come to associate them with the dangerously unstable British lower classes. They were assigned the same negative traits and a similarly low position in the developing class structure. In true nineteenth-century fashion, the Gentlemen feared that any uprising by such an intrinsically flawed people would of necessity lead to anarchy and the rapid destruction of civilisation. The Gentlemen also believed that only strict surveillance, prompt and severe punishments, and the threat of violent reprisals from an active military force could prevent such an occurrence.

References to potential mixed-blood insurrections emerged in the early 1830s when Governor Simpson returned to England after the death of his son. Since many of the Gentlemen believed that Simpson controlled the mixed-bloods through force of character, concerns arose as to whether or not anarchy and insubordination would result if he could not return to the Country quickly.[252] Simpson returned, and mixed-blood–British relations remained calm until 1835.

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[251] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 12, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 29 April 1845.

[252] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 26 September 1833.

In 1835, references to mixed-blood encounters peaked, as two serious occurrences took place during the year which could have readily ended in violence. In January, John Lee Lewes hastily informed James Hargrave that "the *English* half Breeds' *(sic)* were in arms to take by force Miss Sophia McDonnell out of the Compy. establishment at the Forks' *(sic)* so that one of the young Halletts might have her for a Wife."[253] While Lewes had little respect for the young lady in question, his primary fear was that if this marriage was allowed, mixed-blood men would have been encouraged to follow their naturally lascivious tendencies and no women at Red River would be safe from abduction. The marriage did not take place, and the situation was defused by the diplomatic actions of Governor Simpson and Chief Factor Alexander Christie; however, the encounter confirmed the worst fears of many of the Gentlemen. J.D. Cameron summed up the situation by noting its potentially grave consequences:

> In the beginning of last month, we had Some trouble with the Half breeds. Arguments brought them to reason—but unfortunately they found out their own Strength and gave us proofs, that a troublesome Character amongst them would find no difficulty in raising up a Flame and upsetting the whole Settlement. Every days occurrence *(sic)* points out the absolute Necessity of having an Independant *(sic)* Court of Justice with all its Rammifications *(sic)* Established in Red River—and unless Such is established by Government it will never be respected. At present, all is very quiet but there is a great deal of Chaff and Stubble—one spark would be dangerous.—[254]

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[253] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 934-35, J.L. Lewes to James Hargrave, Oxford House, 5 January 1835. The fact that Miss McDonell wanted to marry young Hallett and was prevented from doing so because he was mixed blood (as was she), is skimmed over in Lewes' rendition of the tale. In fact, Lewes put the blame for this incident at the girl's feet, implying that if she had simply accepted the man who had been chosen for her, there would have been no problem.

[254] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 956-7, J.D. Cameron to James Hargrave, Forks Red River, 1 February 1835.

That spark very nearly set the tinder on fire when Thomas Simpson became involved in a row with a group of mixed-blood men near the end of February. Although Simpson's provocation for using a pair of fire tongs to persuade a half-drunk mixed-blood man that he was not wanted in a room appears to be rather thin, the Gentlemen supported Simpson's action on principle. In response to Simpson's action, the mixed-blood men gathered together and delivered an ultimatum to the Gentlemen: either punish Simpson, pay the injured man £50 in compensation, or the mixed-blood men would remove Simpson from the post themselves. As in the previous case, the situation was resolved through arbitration. Although final compensation for the injury was not high—the injured man received £5 and a keg of rum—many of the Gentlemen saw it as an unfortunate precedent and felt that mixed-blood problems were out of control. After describing the incident to James Hargrave, John Charles noted that the time had come "to check their Impudence otherwise they will sett *(sic)* all Authority at defiance."[255] Both George Simpson and Donald Ross agreed with Charles. Simpson commented wearily to Hargrave that "this has been a most troublesome season as here, the half breeds all became quite Savage & independent." In order to cope with the problem, he noted that he had increased the police force to sixty men, was building a gaol, and would be asking for regular military protection.[256] Ross also believed that the situation required government troops to control the mixed-blood threat. Without military aid, the future looked grim: "my firm belief is that both the Settlement and the

[255] NAC MG19, A. 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 980, J. Charles to James Hargrave, Red River, 23 February 1835.

[256] NAC MG19, A. 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 976, George Simpson to James Hargrave, Red River, 28 February 1835.

Fur Trade will fall to pieces on our hands within a very brief term of years—and perhaps get our throats cut to the bargain—"[257]

Military aid did finally arrive in the fall of 1846, by which time relations with the mixed-blood men had become stable, if not easy. By the 1840s, middle-class gender beliefs had become predominant in fur trade society and mixed-blood men who did not fit into the British model were assigned a category of their own, as a "semibarbarous people."[258] Male members of the mixed-blood population faced growing prejudice from the British community. Only those mixed-blood men who exhibited masculine character traits that the British deemed desirable were able to move into British society. By the middle of the century, racism had emerged from gender-based discrimination and even those mixed-blood men whose characters appear to have been modelled on the British ideal had to contend with these stereotypes in their quest for advancement in the Company.

William McMurray was such a man. As the mixed-blood son of James Hargrave's long-time friend Thomas McMurray, William was well-educated, intelligent, and eminently suited to do well in the trade. He entered the Service in 1838, but his mixed-blood heritage ensured that he was still a post manager at the middle of the century. Fortunately, he had British friends who were willing to support his cause. John Rae was obviously familiar with George Simpson's prejudices against mixed-blood men, but he also knew the qualities that Simpson looked for in Gentlemen.

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[257] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1000, D. Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 13 March 1835.

[258] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1858, Rev'd. Wm. Cockran to James Hargrave, Grand Rapids, 3 August 1840.

Consequently, when he wrote to Simpson to plead McMurray's case, he emphasised these qualities and downplayed McMurray's ethnicity:

> Mr. McMurray is a very efficient post manager and otherwise an intelligent man. I hope his claims, when his services have been of sufficiently long duration to entitle him to promotion, may meet with the attention they deserve. He is a half-breed it is true, but he is also a very interested servant for the Company.[259]

While Rae's advocacy did not have a immediate effect on McMurray's future, McMurray was eventually promoted to Chief Trader in 1855 and ended his career as an acting Chief Factor.

As fur trade society entered its consolidation period after 1821, the generation of Gentlemen who rose to positions of power by the middle of the century used strict middle-class British gender beliefs to redefine masculinity in fur trade society. By judging the Indian and mixed-blood men with whom they interacted according to their definition of masculinity, they decided that these groups were naturally flawed. Consequently, they assigned them negative female traits and established the unflattering stereotypes which were later translated into discrimination and prejudice. As members of a society that valued commercial values of conformity, honesty, regularity, and consistency, Hargrave and his companions could not understand that the Indians' or mixed bloods' definitions of masculinity might vary from their own. As a result, Indian men, whose views of masculinity diverged the most, were assigned the most character flaws and the lowest position in the male social order. Although the mixed-blood men were characterised in much the same way as the Indian men, their mixed

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259 HBCA E. 15/8, John Rae to George Simpson, 23 April 1851. McMurray was not the only mixed-blood man who achieved success in the fur trade despite increasing prejudice. Chief Factors William Sinclair and William Christie were also able to follow in their fathers' footsteps in spite of their mixed-blood heritage.

heritage and their stronger position in fur trade power relationships ensured them a higher position in the fur trade social order. Mixed-blood men also appear to have maintained consistent face-to-face relationships with the Gentlemen which may have helped to dispel societal myths on at least a personal level. Moreover, mixed-blood men who adhered to the British definition of masculinity and were able to establish relationships of clientage and patronage with Gentlemen appear to have been able to make the transition between the two groups and gain the acceptance of the British in spite of growing discrimination and prejudice.

CHAPTER 5

FRIENDSHIP AND MENTORING:
Equal Power Relationships in the Fur Trade

> Out of the middle of bawling canadians, bands of Scotch that with their gabbling gaelic rival a puddle of frogs in spring,—and from among the still more distracting crowds of smirking half breed giglets I lift my voice unto thee—[260]

James Hargrave's amusing picture of life in Ft. Garry during the winter of 1826 opened a letter to his friend and mentor, Donald McKenzie. As a well-educated young man in a situation which promised social and economic advancement, Hargrave had quickly dissociated himself not only from the Indians and half-breeds who occupied the lower strata of fur trade society, but also from those 'bawling canadians' and 'bands of Scotch' who were presumed to be only slightly more socially desirable. Instead, he chose his friends carefully from his peers and superiors. Although Hargrave had entered the Service as a clerk, he was a member of the Company's upper ranks—a Gentleman—and as such occupied an elevated social position in this tightly structured, hierarchical organisation. In nineteenth-century fur trade society, Gentlemen like Hargrave and McKenzie were stationed at many widely separated posts where they held positions of authority over groups of dissimilar peoples. Given their isolation and their negative evaluations of Indian and mixed-blood men, it is not surprising to find that they craved close relationships with men who shared similar backgrounds, interests, and aspirations.

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[260] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to Donald McKenzie, Ft. Garry, 5 December 1826.

Any attempt to examine the changing nature of fur trade society in the first half of the nineteenth century would be incomplete without an examination of the male-male relationships upon which the society was based. In order to do this, it is important to study the way that the nineteenth-century definition of masculinity, as based on middle-class gender beliefs, was used to establish equal power relationships between Gentlemen and ensure continuity between generations of officers in fur trade society. An examination of the Hargrave Correspondence indicates that these gender beliefs lay beneath the Gentlemen's evaluations of each other, their friendships, and their mentoring relationships.

James Hargrave and his correspondents spent their formative years in the rapidly industrialising world of early nineteenth-century Britain. Middle class in mindset if not by birth, these men were upwardly-mobile businessmen who operated in a commercial world where success was linked to character and ability. As the British middle class grew in importance and power, middle-class men redefined masculinity for an industrial capitalist world and these male traits and behaviours pervaded British society. Respectability became the predominant characteristic for middle-class men. In order for a man to be considered respectable, he had to exhibit a number of highly valued character traits. Steadiness, industriousness, honesty, thriftiness, and self-control combined to create a masculine ideal characterised by devotion to duty and a general seriousness of character. This definition of masculinity was brought to the Country by officers such as Hargrave and then applied uniformly to all men involved in the fur trade. An examination of the Hargave Correspondence indicates that while these

officers judged Indian and mixed-blood men to lack the requisite character traits, they expected their peers and superiors to meet these requirements.

These nineteenth-century middle-class men placed a high value on male friendships and the Correspondence indicates that they chose their friends carefully from those men who fit their definition of masculinity. As members of a society that elevated men over women and placed distinct barriers between male and female spheres of activity, male-male relationships became increasingly important. Since the contemporary definition of femininity circumscribed women's behaviours, limited their participation in the commercial world, and placed them in permanently unequal power relationships with men, it is not particularly surprising that Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen appear to have looked to their colleagues for more equal power relationships. Through personal interactions and letters, the Gentlemen were able to establish and maintain the friendships and mentoring relationships that played such an important part in determining their social positions and commercial success. While women were viewed as the moral guardians of society in nineteenth-century Britain,[261] the lack of white women may have prompted the Gentlemen to take this role upon themselves, for their letters indicate that they acted as each other's moral guardians until at least the middle of the nineteenth century. The intricate web of relationships that developed between Gentlemen allowed them to use their letters to establish a male moral network that was based on British gender beliefs.

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[261] Davidoff, p. 16.

James Hargrave thought of himself as a gentleman and his opinion was shared by his colleagues. In a letter to his parents in 1827, he noted that his character had met with general approval in fur trade society:

> I am now generally known in the country, and I may say without vanity my character is respected by every one whose good opinion I value in it.[262]

Those Gentlemen who were judged to be of good character and good conduct won the approval of influential men in the fur trade. Hargrave was fortunate in gaining the approval of men like Donald McKenzie and George Simpson. As Hargrave's second Chief Factor and the Governor of Assiniboia, Donald McKenzie was an important man in fur trade society. He paid careful attention to Hargrave and attributed his interest to Hargrave's "sturdy good conduct."[263] Even more significant was George Simpson's approval. By 1831, 'Geordy,' as he was referred to by the young officers, had decided that Hargrave was worthy of his approval and had opened a personal correspondence which lasted throughout Hargrave's career:

> I do not know what the cause has been, if any, but so it has happened that You and I have never as Yet Conversed upon paper; the loss has been mine, and I believe the fault, I must now however endeaver *(sic)* to retrieve the former and make amends for the latter, by opening and Inviting you to a regular Correspondence, from which I feel assured I shall derive both pleasure and instruction.—[264]

Simpson's regard for Hargrave also emerged clearly in the positive description of Hargrave he recorded in his private Character Book. While he noted that Hagrave's health could be somewhat precarious and his temper

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[262] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to his parents, Ft. Garry, 29 January 1827.

[263] As quoted in NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 7, James Hargrave to Donald McKenzie, York Factory, 15 February 1832.

[264] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 378, George Simpson to James Hargrave, Red River Settlement, 19 December 1831.

was at times rather sour, these drawbacks did not stop him from praising Hargrave's "highly correct conduct and character" or commenting that his ability and knowledge of business made him "equal to the management of York Depôt and...better qualified for a Seat in Council than 9 out of 10 of our present Chief Factors."[265]

Hargrave also won the approval of the majority of his peers. While he conceded that "with some the pertinacity with which I adhere to my orders does me no good,"[266] many officers appear to have respected his honesty and impartiality. When he was promoted to Chief Trader in 1833, he was congratulated by friends throughout the Country. Although he commented, "I owe it all to Geordy!"[267] his friends Francis Heron and George Barnston were quick to remind him that his character had earned him the promotion. Heron, who had been prophesying this occurrence for several years, wrote earnestly:

> you may believe me my worthy friend, that there is not one who will Congratulate you on your Success, will do so with a Sincerer heart than the old Heron does—You gained my regard, not in a Casual way, but under such trying Circumstances as Could alone prove the integrity of Your principles, and the worthiness of Your Character—[268]

Barnston also sent congratulations, but noted that while the promotion would bring many letters, he was far more interested in Hargrave's character than his position"

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[265] Glyndwr Williams, ed., ***Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870***, vol. XXX, (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), pp. 214-15. Simpson's regard for Hargrave remained strong over the years.

[266] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to J. Stewart, York Factory, 5 December 1830.

[267] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to C. Cumming, York Factory, 18 July 1833.

[268] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 758, F. Heron to James Hargrave, Ft. Nusqually, 1 March 1834.

> I only request of you to remember, that there is one who thinks more of your Character than your rank: not that I undervalue the mark of approbation which the employ has conferred upon you, nor disregard the solid benefits it bears along with it, but that I am sensible that the propriety of your own action, not your worldly circumstances is the pivot on which your happiness & the esteem of mankind depend.[269]

Hargrave and his contemporaries judged their superior officers according to their middle-class interpretation of masculinity. Those officers who proved themselves to be respectable, hard-working, competent, honest, and genial were highly praised; moreover, they were often viewed as surrogate father figures by the young men. Officers who did not manifest these character traits and behaviours, or became involved in actions that were deemed inappropriate, were quickly condemned for their ungentlemanly conduct and were assumed to have broken an unspoken trust that existed between Commissioned Officers and the Gentlemen who worked under them.

Hargrave was fortunate; all of his 'Bourgeois' were men who earned his respect and admiration, personally and as businessmen. His first 'Bourgeois', John George McTavish, readily filled all of these requirements; however, when McTavish abandoned his country wife and family to marry a Scottish woman in 1830, his 'ungentlemanly' act aroused the wrath of many officers. While what McTavish had done contradicted Hargrave's own beliefs, he remained loyal and defended McTavish's character, if not his actions:

> He has...been for many years the main spring that moved the whole of the business here in the North;—and on his shoulders fell the whole of the drudgery...he has laboured, & I have seen it, like the lowest of Apprentice Clerks in their office—all for their benefit—& yet such is

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269 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 749-50, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Concord, 26 February 1834.

> his reward.—Ingratitude in its darkest dye can go no farther—[270]

As the Chief Factor at York Factory, McTavish had filled one of the most important positions in the fur trade; consequently, he was well-known and had invariably created some enemies. Ed Smith knew McTavish's merit well, having worked with him when he was younger, and assured Hargrave that at least some of the current accusations found their roots in old grievances and envy:

> now that He is far away even had I right to find fault with Him—I would hold my tongue and say nothing—Many of them that visited York Factory would have Him to execute that which they in his place would not have done for others—what he did—there Were always some back cuts leveled at Him—He was out of there *(sic)* reach—their words or Acts could not hurt Him—[271]

After his marriage, McTavish transferred from York Factory to Moose Factory. Over time, the combination of his excellent knowledge of the business, his irreproachable business conduct, and his transfer seem to have healed the majority of the breaches caused by his marriage. By the time of his death in 1847, Alexander Christie was able to characterise him as, "respected, and beloved by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and his death is universally regretted."[272]

Hargrave's second 'Bourgeois' was Donald McKenzie, a man whose geniality and competence consistently earned him the praise of the men who worked under him. While there are many references to McKenzie in the

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[270] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 7, James Hargrave to E. Smith, York Factory, 1 December 1831.

[271] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 361-2, E. Smith to James Hargrave, Ft. Simpson, 26 November 1831.

[272] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 13, A. Christie to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry Red River Settlement, 6 December 1847.

Correspondence, Hargrave best summed up the characteristics that made McKenzie so popular when writing to Cuthbert Cumming in 1826:

> Your old Bourgeois is as jolly and plump as ever—rolling about in his inexhaustible good humour, happy himself—and making every one happy around him.—He has as you know the management of both the Colony & Coys. affairs here,—and it would do your heart good to see him deciding cases ensonced *(sic)* in his elbow chair, covered with a buffalo robe, and crowned with the very identical broad scotch bonnet that he used to sport of yore...to sum up, he is as you used to call him, still Sir John Falstaff.[273]

While letters show that Francis Heron shared Hargrave's evaluation of McKenzie, he was especially impressed by McKenzie's modesty and natural good sense. Although McKenzie was both a Chief Factor and the Governor of Assiniboia, Heron believed that he was able to keep his men happy because he could accept his achievements without parading them.[274] Although Hargrave's opinion of Heron would change by the middle of the century, in the 1820s he occasionally dreamed of an ideal male world where he could spend his days together with Heron and McKenzie without being subject to the intrusions of reality:

> I have often regretted that our old respected Bourgeois you & I had not the luck to spend the three years we have all been together in some quiet corner where the happiness we enjoyed among ourselves would not have been subject to the influence of clerical inquisition or alloyed by the acidity of colonial politics:—where we all could have stretched ourselves out to bask on some sunny bank and each spun his own yarn and cantered his own hobby without feeling the malignant scowl of one evil eye upon our peace and our fortunes.[275]

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273 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 1, James Hargrave to C. Cumming, Ft. Garry, 25 November 1826.

274 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 108, F. Heron to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, August 1826.

275 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 2, James Hargrave to F. Heron, York Factory, 1 December 1827.

Hargrave retained his admiration for McKenzie throughout his career. When McKenzie decided to retire to New York with his family in 1833, Hargrave complimented him on the care he took in making his decisions:

> the very prudent arrangements you have made in your private affairs & the example you have thus set to retiring North Westers.—I scarcely know any who have acted so wisely... I hope yet in future years to rummage you out when my turn comes to bid farewell to these wilds—and take a lesson for my guidance from such an excellent example.[276]"

Hargrave did not have a chance to learn the joys of retirement living from McKenzie, who died after a fall from his horse in 1851, but his own dealings with clerks in the 1830s and 1840s reflect a geniality which may have been encouraged by his early years with McKenzie.[277]

Alexander Christie, Hargraves' third 'Bourgeois', took over the management of York Factory after John George McTavish's marriage. While stepping into McTavish's shoes may not have been easy, Christie soon won the approval of his staff. Hargrave was extremely impressed with Christie's character, describing him to George Barnston as "a plain, honest, downright lowland Scot,"[278] and to William Connolly as "a plain honest upright Gentleman—the best tempered man alive: a second Donald McKenzie in that way.—"[279] For both Hargrave and Christie, honesty, unaffectedness, sociability, and ethical behaviour were essential to their

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[276] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to D. McKenzie, York Factory, 1 December 1833.

[277] For further information on Donald McKenzie, see Sylvia Van Kirk, "Donald McKenzie," ***Dictionary of Canadian Biography***, vol. VIII, Francess G. Halpenny ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 557-558. For a more detailed, albeit romanticised, view of Hargrave's relationships with his clerks in the 1840s, see Robert Michael Ballantyne, ***Hudson Bay***, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1902).

[278] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to George Barnston, York Factory, 12 July 1830.

[279] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to Wm. Connolly, York Factory, 1 December 1830.

definition of masculinity,[280] but they also shared a similar approach to their work; thus, they quickly established a close personal and working relationship. By 1832, Hargrave viewed Christie more as a surrogate father than as his superior officer: "Our honest Factor Mr. Christie is one of the worthiest souls alive, and treats me rather as a son than an inferior.—"[281] When Christie was transferred to Red River in 1833, Hargrave reiterated these feelings to George Simpson: "I regret his loss deeply for I have lived with him much like a Son with a father[.] His good sense equal temper & kindly disposition gave a sense of care & happiness to our little circle...."[282]

Christie stepped from one difficult job into another when he transferred into Red River to take over from Donald McKenzie; however, his good sense, kindness, and honesty soon made him popular. Rev'd. William Cockran commented approvingly to Hargrave that Christie made a good Governor because his "paternal goodness" made him take an energetic interest in the affairs of the Colony.[283] Another Gentleman, James McMillan, agreed that

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[280] Hargrave was not alone in using these types of characteristics to judge his Bourgeois. George Barnston and Charles Ross were only two of the Gentlemen who shared Hargrave's basis of judgment. As early as 1824, Barnston commented to Hargrave that he had been fortunate enough to see his old Bourgeois, Mr. Leslie, during the winter and had found him to be "still the rough honest character of a Highlander that he appears at first sight to be. I have seen few men of the same advantages, possessed of such upright honorable principles...." While Barnston viewed Leslie's hot temper as a character flaw, he noted that it did not prevent him from being a good superior officer, as "no one Can be more open to the conviction of reason than he is in the Cooler moments." Charles Ross, writing from McLeods Lake in 1832, presented a similar positive evaluation of his new Bourgeois, Mr. Dease. Ross commented that he had found Dease to be "a most amiable, warm hearted, sociable man—quite free from that haughtiness & reserve which often characterizes those, who have little else to recommend them—" NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 30, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Churchill, 21 June 1824; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 403-4, Charles Ross to James Hargrave, McLeods Lake, April 1832.

[281] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to C. Cumming, York Factory, 20 August 1832.

[282] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to George Simpson, York Factory, 24 August 1833.

[283] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 665, Rev'd. Wm. Cockran to James Hargrave, Grand Rapids, 10 December 1833.

Christie made a good Governor, but attributed his success to the confidence that he fostered in the people with his honesty, high principles, and ability to take decisive action.[284]

An examination of the Correspondence shows that this younger generation of officers expected the same correct behaviour from their peers that they demanded from their superiors. The younger men's letters resound with phrases characterising individuals according to the nineteenth-century middle-class definition of masculinity. A Gentleman who was deemed to possess these desirable character traits was praised accordingly. The most common expressions of praise reflected the value that the officers placed on respectability, gentlemanliness, steadiness, industriousness, intelligence, and personal worth. Thus, Gentlemen often characterised one of their peers, or a young man who worked under them, as "a fine gentlemanly young fellow,"[285] "a fine modest and intelligent young fellow,"[286] or "a clever, steady and moral man."[287] High praise was awarded to the man whose work habits made him "a perfect piece of Clockwork,"[288] or "steady to the Desk as the needle is to the pole."[289] This was especially true of clerks, for the contemporary understanding of the moral weaknesses of youth made conscientious officers such as Hargrave take pains to imbue proper beliefs

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[284] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 684, J. McMillan to James Hargrave, Forks Red River, 1833.

[285] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 5, James Hargrave to D. Finlayson, York Factory, 26 November 1829.

[286] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to D. McKenzie, 21 November 1829.

[287] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1002, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 13 March 1835.

[288] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 10, James Hargrave to George Simpson. York Factory, 1 December 1834.

[289] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to J. McMillan, York Factory, 13 September 1832.

and behaviours in the young men who served under them as officers-in-training.[290]

Hargrave chose his closest friends from men who shared his definition of masculinity. Although he made many friends over the course of his career, Hargrave's lifelong friends were men who exhibited many of the ideal male characteristics. George Barnston, Cuthbert Cumming, John Siveright, and Duncan Finlayson all fell into this category. While Barnston suffered from intermittent depressions and was prone to deny his own worth, describing

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[290] There are many references to the officers' evaluations of their clerks. A representative sampling can be found in NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 10, James Hargrave to A. Christie, York Factory, 1 March 1835; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1029. George Simpson to James Hargrave, Red River Settlement, 1 May 1835; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 26 September 1833; and NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 948-49, J.G. McTavish to James Hargrave, Moose Factory, 24 January 1835. For a view of the Hudson's Bay Company from the perspective of a clerk, see R.M. Ballantyne.

As Commissioned Officers, Hargrave and his peers were concerned with developing their clerks' characters as well as their business skills. The Correspondence indicate that the officers whole-heartedly believed that young men needed the supervision of older men in order to grow into worthy gentlemen; consequently, they paid close attention to the clerks under their supervision, praising those who manifested desirable traits and guiding those who strayed from the ideal. Clerks received the highest praise for manifesting traits that were considered essential for the middle-class man. References to clerks' characters in the Correspondence indicates that steadiness was seen as a young man's most valuable trait. Regularity, industriousness, modesty, and mildness were also important. This combination of male and female traits reflects the Gentlemen's interpretation of adolescence as a period of incomplete manhood.

It is important to remember that many of the clerks were adolescents. While Hargrave, Barnston, and Finlayson all joined the Company in their late teens or early twenties, many men joined in their mid-teens. For instance, R.M. Ballantyne, who served rather inauspiciously under Hargrave in the 1840s, entered the Service at age sixteen. As a young clerk who was strongly influenced by the contemporary views of masculinity, he drew a rosy picture of a convivial male world where teenage apprentices learned from older clerks and all shared the joys of Bachelor Hall together under the watchful eye of their superior officer. In describing his time with the "happy, careless young fellows" (p. 81) who were brought together at Norway House when the canoes arrived from Canada, he makes it clear that he was by no means the youngest member of this mutual admiration society:

> many a happy hour did I spend upon one of the clerk's bed—every inch of which was generally occupied —listening to the story or the song. The young men there had arrived from the distant quarters of America, and some of them even from England. Some were in the prime of manhood, and had spent many years in the Indian country; some were beginning to scrape the down from their still soft chins; while others were boys of fourteen who had just left home.... (pp. 80-81)

himself upon occasion as "an idle & worthless runagate,"[291] " a wretched elf,"[292] and "a nondescript Animal,"[293] he remained one of Hargrave's closest friends. He was esteemed by his colleagues for his high principles, his "noble mind,"[294] and his "open, genteel, & manly"[295] character. Cuthbert Cumming also fit this model. When Hargrave first described Cumming to Barnston in 1828, he portrayed Cumming as possessing many of the character traits he valued most highly: "credit me he is one of the very few in this country worthy of being called a Gentleman in the true meaning of the term.—He is really a straight forward, honorable and worthy soul.—"[296] Later the same year, Hargrave expressed his regard for Cumming in even stronger terms when he introduced him to John Siveright:

> so allow me to introduce him to you as one of whom I *feel proud* in calling my friend. I have in this country met with few whom I esteem beyond him.—His manly, open, and upright character I fully know, and with confidence recommend his acquaintance to one I regard so much as yourself.—[297]

While it is impossible to judge the effect of this introduction, Cumming and Siveright quickly became close friends. Siveright often complained that he lacked the education that younger men like Hargrave and Barnston

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[291] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 86, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Alexander, 26 April 1826.

[292] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 140, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Langley, 17 February 1828.

[293] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1158, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Martin's Falls, 2 February 1836.

[294] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 6 July 1831.

[295] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 497, J.G. McTavish to James Hargrave, Moose Factory, 25 January 1833.

[296] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 3, James Hargrave to George Barnston, York Factory, 1 July 1828. In the 1840s, R.M. Ballantyne commented that Cumming was "a tall, bald-headed sweet-tempered man of forty-five, who has spent the greater part of his life among the bears and Indians of Hudson Bay." Ballantyne, p. 73.

[297] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 3, James Hargrave to J. Siveright, York Factory, 23 July 1828.

possessed, but this drawback appears to have been compensated for by his honesty and careful good sense. As an "onery *(sic)* & careful old Scot," Hargrave felt that he was "one of the fittest Gentlemen to consult in difficulties...."[298] Duncan Finlayson was another man who could be depended upon to deal with the most delicate issues. Known throughout the fur trade as a "man of honor,"[299] Finlayson's high moral standards were often held up to other Gentlemen as an example to be followed.[300] When Hargrave was courting his future wife and had to return to the Country unexpectedly, he trusted Finlayson to visit Letitia's parents and act as a character reference for him.

Letters between the Gentlemen reveal their expectations of their superiors and peers. On the one hand, their expectation that Indian and mixed-blood men would be unable to meet their standards of masculinity seems to have created a built-in discrimination that ensured that only exceptional native men gained their approval; on the other hand, expectations that their colleagues would possess these desired character traits and evince 'correct' behaviours may have caused them to excuse or rationalise minor infractions of their standards. However, they were not loathe to condemn behaviour that directly contravened their beliefs. Consequently, when Chief Factor John Stuart scandalised fur trade society by behaving in an ungentlemanly fashion when he conducted a sordid and drawn-out public battle with his clerk Annance over Mary Taylor's adultery, he was quickly

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298 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to C. Cumming, York Factory, 8 July 1829.

299 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to Letitia McTavish, London, 14 March 1838.

300 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 1078, Rev'd. Wm. Cockran to James Hargrave, Red River Settlement, 8 August 1835.

condemned by many Gentlemen. In a society that placed increasing importance on respectability and moderation for Gentlemen, Stuart's actions had not only destroyed his respectability with his peers, but as Ed Smith bluntly stated, he had also violated the unspoken expectations of mutual respectability that existed between Commissioned Officers and the Gentlemen who worked under them:

> He has rendered Himself despicable to all with whom he is conected *(sic)*...His ... Gentlemen under Him are men of talent, respectable in familie *(sic)*, education, and Character, They will act as H.B. Men—but they can not respect the Man that is their present Commander—Poor fellows they deserve well of the Company both from merits, services, and correct behaviour—[301]

While the type of sexual escapades that Stuart's affair brought to light were clearly in violation of the Gentlemen's understanding of appropriate masculine behaviour and thus easy to denounce, other situations arose that were much more ambiguous. The mystery surrounding the death of Thomas Simpson created just such a situation. Although the Correspondence presents an image of Simpson as a hot-tempered young man who had a high opinion of his own worth and no use for natives, his respectability, education, intelligence, and wit quickly earned him the esteem and friendship of many Gentlemen in the Country. Perceived by his peers and superiors to be a man who was on his way to a high position in the fur trade,[302] he appeared to possess many of the most desirable male character traits. Hargrave and Simpson became close friends soon after they met in 1830. In a letter to Duncan Finlayson, Hargrave commented that Simpson's

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301 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 635, E. Smith to James Hargrave, Lake Winnipeg, 16 August 1833.

302 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1882, D. Finlayson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 18 December 1840.

presence at York Factory had finally provided him with a friend whose interests were as wide-ranging as his own:

> I am truly happy in having at length found here a companion in Mr. T. Simpson who has something else to talk of besides the d----d politics of this country.—...I verily believe the pleasure I receive from this rational society has acted materially in restoring the tone of my spirits & consequently the revival of health.[303]

Simpson and Hargrave shared similar views on many issues, including country marriage, and they remained close friends until Simpson and two of his mixed-blood travelling companions died under ambiguous circumstances during a expedition in 1839. His death rocked fur trade society because it upset many of the Gentlemen's previous evaluations of his character. While it was unclear whether Simpson had shot his two men in self-defense and had then been shot by a third man,[304] or if he had shot the men deliberately and then committed suicide,[305] his colleagues were shocked. Whereas the idea of a heroic Simpson defending himself against murderous mixed-blood men fit neatly into the prevailing beliefs about both parties, the image of Simpson as the perpetrator of a murder-suicide did not. Respectable nineteenth-century gentlemen did not commit murder or suicide; thus, the Gentlemen were placed in a difficult position. Either they had to accept that they had been sadly wrong in their original evaluations of Simpson, or they had to find a way to rationalise his actions. They

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303 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 6, James Hargrave to D. Finlayson, York Factory, 1 December 1830.

304 MacLeod, no. 30, "Letitia Hargrave to Mary McTavish, York Factory, 9 September 1841," pp. 100-101. Letitia appears to have refused to believe that Simpson could have committed suicide, preferring rather to believe that the mixed bloods who accompanied Simpson had killed him, but that their guilt would never be revealed because their lack of religious feeling ensured that they would never confess.

305 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1882, D. Finlayson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 18 December 1840.

rationalised. Simpson had been insane when he killed the two men and himself. By believing that Simpson had gone mad and killed his companions in a fit of insanity, Gentlemen such as Hargrave and Finlayson were able to keep their original assessments intact:

> That the poor man must have been insane, is I think, clear, otherwise how could a person like him, who was on the high road to fame & fortune have committed *such* a horrible deed—a deed, he must have been aware, if it did not Cost him his life, would have attached a stain to his name, worse ever *(sic)* than death.—[306]

While Gentlemen were occasionally ostracised for going beyond the boundaries of acceptable male behaviour,[307] most male friendships in the Country appear to have been placid, supportive, and longlasting. Hargrave made many friends throughout his career, but the majority of his closest friendships evolved during his early years in the trade. As an amiable man with a responsible situation in a central location, Hargrave was soon established as a valued correspondent and friend. Not only did he have an insider's knowledge of fur trade gossip and affairs, but he also had a sharp mind, an occasionally biting tongue, and an excellent grasp of the English language. Moreover, judging from the mass of the Correspondence, he appears to have enjoyed writing long letters as much as he enjoyed receiving them.

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306 *Ibid.*

307 Hargrave dropped at least two friends when they committed acts which he felt were unacceptable for Gentlemen. As previously mentioned, he appears to have cut Francis Heron as soon as he abandoned his wife and family in the Country and ran off with a chambermaid in Britain. He also appears to have cut Grant Forrest after Forrest and a Mr. Fisher were involved in a well-publicised drunken brawl over allegations about Mrs. Forrest's chastity. While the Correspondence indicates that publicity, rather than the acts themselves, often lay at the root of scandal and ostracism in fur trade society, no direct correlation can be made in Hargrave's case, for he did not cut John Stuart in spite of the fact that his case was the most blatantly publicised and the most sexual of all.

Even though a prolonged stay in the Country or a posting at a central depôt such as York Factory enabled Gentlemen to meet many of their colleagues, most Gentlemen relied on letters to maintain their friendships. Consequently, personal correspondences were carefully maintained, even if there was little actual news to report at times. As John Macallum pointed out when apologising to Hargrave for not responding quickly to one of his letters in 1834, it was often easier to write to people who did not live in the Country:

> The truth of the matter has been that I had nothing of consequence & estimate—no woof & warp whereby a letter, might be fabricated—no novelties or curiosities to incite interest, or afford amusement. Had you been situated in any of the other quarters of the globe I would have felt no lack of material: I should have taken an Indian & dissected him—enlarged on his moral & physical qualities & peculiarities,—minutely described his dress, abode, utensils & implements of war; & after committing him to the tomb have glanced at the climate, resources & productions of his Country.[308]

In spite of these constraints, letters from friends were highly valued, as is evident in Hargrave's glee at receiving a letter from his friend John Siveright: "Your kind letter of last spring reached me in safety, and it is difficult for me to describe with what delight I skulk into a secret corner like a cur with a bone, till I devour all the valued tokens of my absent friends *(sic)* remembrance."[309] Nor were Hargrave's merits as a correspondent and friend lost on his colleagues. Compliments to Hargrave on the quality of his letters and the importance of his friendship form a theme in the Correspondence. Charles Ross' comments are representative when he thanked Hargrave for

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[308] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 833, J. Macallum to James Hargrave, Red River, 12 August 1834.

[309] NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to John Siveright, York Factory, 9 July 1829.

his "highly esteemed and very interesting & communicative Letter" and assured him that "Anything from your able Pen is sure to please."[310] While some compliments may have been prompted by the courtesies of the day, many appear to have been genuine. For instance, under George Barnston's evident enjoyment of his purple prose, rests a very genuine appreciation of Hargrave's value:

> My mind rests upon the Contents of your highly valued favors with the same sense of delight, which a traveller feels, when he stops to regard the Beauties of a verdant and flowing meadow, in the midst of a bleak and inhospitable plain....You flatter me, Hargrave, and you must *sniff* the incense in your turn, when I declare the admiration in which I hold your talent, and the pride I entertain in being possessed of such a friend. Say have you a *store* of Ideas and Language by you, *arranged* and *assorted* in such a way, that you can upon the moment brg. *(sic)* forth the articles you require, and sent them abroad, glowing from your ardent Pen; or does the soul unconsciously supply from its copious and hidden source, whatever is most requisite for the desires and wants of the Moral Being which it actuates. It is the Magic of Mechanism, or the Gift of Nature, the force of Reason, or the fire of Passion, which accomplishes the happy end—the delightful act, of expressing yourself in so pleasing and amiable a Strain.[311]

As this quotation also clearly indicates, the nineteenth-century definition of masculinity which these men shared did not preclude sentimentality between male friends.[312]

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[310] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 116, Charles Ross to James Hargrave, Babine Country, 2 January 1827.

[311] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 501, George Barnston to James Hargrave, Ft. Albany, 28 January 1833.

[312] Hyam, ***Empire and Sexuality***, pp. 72-73. Although Hyam's text concentrates on the doctrines of late-Victorian manliness, his discussion of early-Victorian male friendships coincides with information found in the Correspondence. Hyam notes that early-Victorian men were often quite sentimental in their friendships. Romantic, non-sexual attachments were accepted as normal for young men, just as it was considered normal for these men to live together in groups when they were serving overseas. In these all-male commercial or political enclaves, young men could experience the "unalloyed love they thought possible only between men" (p. 72). While the Correspondence does not attach as much importance to Bachelor Hall, the majority of Hargrave's lifelong friendships were formed while he was a

Male friendships also involved a great deal more than simply sharing local gossip and domestic or business concerns. While these ingredients played a part, the Correspondence demonstrates that the Gentlemen perceived their relationships with other men to be much more complex. True friendship first involved finding "a *(sic)* honest heart to whom one can open ones *(sic)* mind without reserve,"[313] and then adhering to pre-established and well-understood norms which outlined the duties of friendship.[314] For Gentlemen in the fur trade during the first half of the nineteenth century, friendship was an intricate mixture of reciprocities. Hargrave and his friends expected to act as each others' moral guardians and champions, to share in each others' triumphs and tragedies, and if necessary, to stand as surrogate fathers for each others' children. While all of these duties of friendship were important, empathy and sympathy formed an underlying thread through these other mutual obligations; consequently, for the purpose of conserving space, they will not be addressed specifically.

An examination of the Correspondence indicates that moral guardianship was the Gentlemen's most important reciprocal commitment. Whereas middle- and upper-class women in Britain acted as the

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member. In addition, other references make it clear that Bachelor Hall occupied an important place in a young man's life, for it was seen as "the best preventive of sickness and the blues." (NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 986, Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 27 February 1835). By the late-Victorian period, the definition of masculinity had changed again and sentimentality had been replaced by machismo.

313 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to Duncan Finlayson, York Factory, 29 May 1828. Hargrave also noted that making friends with other fur trade Gentlemen was not always easy, because many men were so competitive that they believed that "their path to advancement is obstructed by rivals who would act the unmanly act of turning the unweighed expressions of an unreserved intercourse of minds to the ruin of their prospects in life."

314 While the scope of this study does not allow for a tangential examination of the nature of male friendship in Britain during this period, it is obvious by comparing the letters between Gentlemen in the Country and then between Gentlemen and their friends in Britain, that the expectations surrounding male friendships were essentially the same in both places.

moral guardians of their society, in fur trade society white women were still scarce as late as 1850, requiring the Gentlemen to take this role upon themselves. Hargrave and his friends acted as moral guardians of fur trade society by chastising, counselling, and praising each other through the medium of their letters. As a result, they assured the implementation of their beliefs and eventually modified the old social order in the fur trade.

While there are many examples of reciprocal interactions in the letters, a brief look at Hargrave's friendship with George Barnston over the years provides one of the best instances of the way that moral guardianship operated. Although Barnston was a close friend, his occasional depressions and his intense distrust of George Simpson caused Hargrave concern.[315] After a receiving a distressing letter in 1828, Hargrave chastised Barnston openly for behaving in an 'unmanly' fashion in "nourishing a desponding & feverish sensibility that renders your whole soul unhappy." Instead of acting in this effeminate fashion, Hargrave counselled him to have more fortitude: "resume that manly tone of thought & views of existence—of which I know your mind is capable, reflect that both as a man and a Christian it shows a weakness unworthy either character to yield to the pressure of external circumstances...."[316] Barnston accepted this advice, although he scolded Hargrave for his remonstrative tone; however, Hargrave was unrepentant

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[315] Barnston believed that his opportunities for advancement were being blocked by Simpson; consequently, he did not hesitate to publicise his attack on Simpson by communicating his feelings directly to the administrators in London before resigning from the Company in anger in 1831. In 1832, he rejoined, but continued to vilify Simpson. The Correspondence provides no evidence that Simpson was actually discriminating against Barnston; instead, it appears that Simpson respected Barnston's high moral standards and eventually granted Barnston the promotions he desired in the 1840s. Simpson's actions may have been encouraged by repeated intercessions on Barnston's behalf from well-respected officers such as Hargrave and J.G. McTavish.

[316] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 3, James Hargrave to George Barnston, York Factory, 1 July 1828.

and attributed his bluntness to the depth of his friendship: "it was the effusion of the heart—not the head,—a less interested correspondent would have expressed himself more in the tone of the world."[317] Many years later, in 1837, he had occasion to combine chastisement, counselling, and praise when he rebuked Barnston for his continued railing against George Simpson. As a close friend of both men, Hargrave was in an uncomfortable position. While his own slow promotion allowed him to empathise with Barnston, he was also aware that Barnston's unrestrained attacks on Simpson were causing some of the other Gentlemen to drop Barnston's acquaintance:

> You pain me much by the manner and tone you have used in your letters for the last few years, regarding certain individuals in the Service Country.—To speak candidly I cannot acknowledge the justice of your sharp censure, for I know not the facts of the case, and still less can I approve the prudence of the course you pursue.[318]

While assuring Barnston that he would always remain his friend, he advised Barnston to cultivate moderation so that his other friends could work towards the advancement that a man of his calibre deserved:

> Let me press moderation on your attention—& believe me tis the most politic course.—Many I know in this land are your friends, whose hands are rendered fettered by the *tone* of your letters.—...You think you are a marked man;—I see & hear much of both publicly & privately & I will say I cannot perceive this.—The only remark is that your prejudices are strong and your language often unmeasured, but that your honor & high principles are highly esteemed & for all that is past your path to promotion is still as open as to any of our standing.—

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317 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 5, James Hargrave to George Barnston, York Factory, 14 July 1829.

318 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to George Barnston, Moose Factory, 17 August 1837.

> Credit me that had I loved & respected you less my words would have been fewer & perhaps more palatable.—[319]

Hargrave had not always been this patient. As a young and occasionally hot-tempered Gentleman in the 1820s, he had in turn received similar advice from friends such as Duncan Finlayson. When Hargrave was becoming impatient with the Company in 1829, Finlayson gently chided him and reminded him that his future concerns were more important than his immediate frustrations:

> you should not allow your passions, when provoked, to get the better of your judgment—bear always in mind the point you have at stake, which will enable you to weather the Storm and ultimately gain the wished for haven, whereas a Rupture might blush your bright prospects forever—we should never disregard remote consequences for the sake of momentary gratification or even present relief—But enough—your own good sense and discernment will point out to you what course to steer to weather the Storm, better than I can on paper—I however hope that nothing either directly or indirectly will be thrown in your way to make your Situation uncomfortable—if it should be so, let me once more beg of you, to bear up with it for a time—all things will have an end—[320]

Another important aspect of the Gentlemen's roles as moral guardians came in their approval or disapproval of each others' actions with regard to sexuality and women. In the 1820s, when sexual peccadilloes were still acceptable, Hargrave was amused by Cuthbert Cumming's confession of a sexual adventure: "I was not a little amused at the round about confession you make of your "affaire due cour" *(sic)*—so like a story of the first trespass of a young fellow with his first mistress.—My dear fellow we are all

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[319] *Ibid.*

[320] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 203, D. Finlayson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 12 December 1829.

alike...."[321] By the 1840s, however, attitudes had changed. When Hargrave was making plans to travel to Red River in 1841, John Lee Lewes reminded him that he would have to live up to these new expectations: "You are now a married Man so behave yourself if you go to R.R. in the Spring. Scandal was rife the last time you was there, beware therefore."[322] In the end, Hargrave decided not go, and was praised for his decision by Duncan Finlayson. At the time, Letitia Hargrave was pregnant with the couple's first child and Finlayson reinforced Hargrave's belief that pregnancy was a disabling state, rendering women especially fragile and mentally vulnerable. Consequently, Finlayson agreed that it was Hargrave's duty as a husband to remain with his wife:

> I cannot see how you could with propriety, have left Mrs. Hargrave in her then, very precarious state of health without rendering you both miserable: as the separation from her husband, and the consequent solicitude for his safety; together with the apprehension for the result of her approaching hour of trial, might to a mind like her's *(sic)*, keen & alive to all the tender sensibilities of her Sex, Prove too much for her Strength & Sink her to a premature grave—[323]

While the Correspondence indicates that moral guidance played a fundamental role in male friendships, it also reveals that Gentlemen often acted as champions for each other. In a society where reputation and respectability were growing increasingly important, Gentleman were careful to try and prevent scandal from tainting their friends' reputations. For instance, during the 1830s, Alexander Christie quickly recognised the

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321 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to C. Cumming, Ft. Garry, 24 March 1827.

322 Glazebrook, ed., no. 127, "John Lee Lewes to James Hargrave, Ft. Simpson, November 1840," p. 329.

323 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1959, Duncan Finlayson to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 27 March 1841.

amount of damage that outrageous tales could do to Gentlemen's characters. Stationed as he was at Red River—"a sad place for Scandal"—he felt it was his duty to nullify any gossip that would disgrace his friends' characters.[324] When Hargrave's name emerged in Red River gossip at the end of this scandal-laden decade, Christie acted quickly to discredit the rumours. Hargrave was appreciative and thanked him for his "friendly interference in discouraging this rumour otherwise likely to injure me by the publicity it would give...."[325]

Gentlemen often championed their friends' personal reputations, and they also provided them with introductions and interceded for them in business affairs. As York Factory was a central location in the fur trade, Hargrave often received letters of introduction from Gentlemen who had friends travelling to or through his district. When Ed Smith's colleague of seven years, John McLeod, was transferred from his district, Smith wrote to Hargrave to introduce McLeod and commented that "Any service You may have in your power to render Him I will consider it the same as if confined to myself."[326] In another instance, George Simpson wrote to Hargrave to introduce Captain George Cary, who had agreed to manage an experimental farm at Red River for five years. After asking Hargrave to apply his "best & kindest attentions" to Cary and his family, Simpson ensured Hargrave's full co-operation by appealing to his sense of duty and the value he placed on gentlemanly conduct:

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[324] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1361, A. Christie to James Hargrave, Red River, 21 March 1837.

[325] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to A. Christie, Norway House, 8 March 1837.

[326] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 397-8, E. Smith to James Hargrave, Ft. Simpson, 17 March 1832.

> Mr. Cary, has been introduced to me by one of my most attached Friends and I have assured him that at York he will meet with a kind reception from my Friend Hargrave; he is a Military Man, very Gentlemanly, and altho *small* I think you will like him.[327]

Simpson was correct; Hargrave found Cary to be "a fine worthy and intelligent fellow."[328] Whereas Hargrave was expected to fulfill Simpson's request, he reciprocated by indirectly or directly pleading the causes of many of his friends. Hargrave ensured that Simpson was kept aware of the positive characteristics of Gentlemen such as his brother-in-law William McTavish and George Barnston by often referring to them in his letters. However, he demanded more of his friendship with Simpson when he openly interceded for friends who had lost Simpson's favour. His intercession for Richard Rae was such a case. Hargrave had become friends with Rae in the early 1830s. He thoroughly approved of Rae's character and was more than hopeful of his chances for promotion: "I know *not one* of your years in the Coys. *(sic)* employment who promises better to rise in the service, or who more deserves it.—"[329] Rae did not possess Hargrave's patience and was very disillusioned when he left the Company in 1837 in hope of obtaining a better situation in the United States. His plans did not materialise and by the next spring he was desperate to find re-employment with the Company. Hargrave wrote to Simpson to familiarise him with Rae's situation and plead his case:

> He feels so ashamed of his Wild Goose Chase that he cannot muster firmness to address you himself else he would have done so: I therefore willingly hold the pen for him to solicit an opportunity for his return to the service

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327 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fos. 1260-61, George Simpson to James Hargrave, Norway House, 20 June 1836.

328 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to A. Christie, York Factory, 8 March 1837.

329 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to Richard Rae, York Factory, 26 July 1832.

> should you be pleased to allow his application a favorable consideration—...From what I saw of him at YF, *(sic)* there are few young Men of his standing in the Coy. *(sic)* whom I think more highly of.—[330]

In spite of Hargrave's carefully worded request, Simpson was spared the need to reach a decision on Rae's case; instead of rejoining the Company, Rae and his brother decided to start a small business in Upper Canada.

As Hargrave and his companions rose in importance in fur trade society, they took on more domestic concerns and their male relationships were extended to cover these added responsibilities. Gentlemen like Cuthbert Cumming, stationed away from their fur trade families, had always had to depend on their colleagues to ensure that their dependents were adequately supplied. As a result, Cumming ritually instructed Hargrave to send his wife and children whatever supplies they needed. In order to carry out requests such as these, Gentlemen relayed the information across the Country and worked together to organise shipping and distribution:

> I then request you will take the trouble to select the articles & see them packed for my family....You have better speak to Mr. Finlayson on the subject he will be able to let you know what they stand in need of,...I will forthwith write Mr. McTavish to secure a safe passage for the articles to Red River and on that hand there will be no difficulty—[331]

Cumming was not the only Gentleman who was separated from his family and dependent upon his friends. In the 1820s and 1830s, Gentlemen who left their mixed-blood families and country wives while they returned to Britain on furlough also had to depend on their friends to ensure that their family concerns were met. For instance, when J.G. McTavish returned to Britain on

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[330] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 13, James Hargrave to George Simpson, New York, 31 April 1838.

[331] Glazebrook, ed., no. 13, "Cuthbert Cumming to James Hargrave, Lac des Chats, 20 April 1829," p. 34.

furlough, he left Hargrave in charge of his country wife and children. While he was gone, Hargrave sent him information about his family's welfare. In the spring of 1830, not knowing that McTavish had already married and had no intention of returning to York Factory, Hargrave sent him a report on his wife and family that emphasised their devotion; he stressed that they were all "well & happy paying all spring a visit to the river sides to see when the road shall open for you;"[332] In spite of the fact that McTavish did not return to deal with his personal affairs, he obviously felt that Hargrave's actions in his regard required acknowledgement. He wrote: "I thank you kindly for the interest you took in my affairs of last season. I would have written you specially on the subject, but from motives which I may explain sometime hereafter, I did not wish to mix you up at all in any way with what concerned me—"[333] Years later, when Hargrave had to leave York Factory to attend the annual Council, he followed this well-established custom by appointing his brother-in-law and second-in-command, William McTavish, to look after his family.

Letters between Hargrave and his correspondents reveal that these officers expected to act in surrogate father roles for their friends, and that they took care in looking after each other's families. This may be partially due to the fact that the majority of Gentlemen had families of their own and could identify with other Gentlemen's plights; in addition, they also realised that they would need the same services from their friends if the situations

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[332]NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 5, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 26 May 1830.

[333] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fo. 282, J.G. McTavish to James Hargrave, Moose Factory, 10 January 1830.

were reversed. More importantly, however, the Gentlemen's understanding of friendship entailed these types of reciprocal obligations and duties.

As the fur trade became less isolated and the education of children took on added importance, Gentlemen often acted as surrogate fathers for each other's children. Since educating children meant sending them to Red River or out of the Country and it was often impossible for Gentlemen to obtain furloughs to travel with their children or personally oversee their health and progress, they depended on their friends to act for them. While the Correspondence shows that Gentlemen who sent their children to Red River to be educated often arranged to have friends check periodically on the children's progress and relay this information back to them, sending children to Britain for their educations often required male friends to play a more active role. The letters indicate that Gentlemen expected their friends to take parental roles and accept responsibility for their children; however, they also felt obliged to return these favours in any way that they could. When Hargrave returned to Britain in 1839, he acted as a surrogate father for R. McLeod Sr. and Rev'd. William Cockran. McLeod's son, John was being sent to England to be placed under George Simpson's care and Cockran's son, Thomas, was being sent to school. McLeod had written to Hargrave to request that he give John "the favor of your protection while at York factory *(sic)* as well as on the journey across the Sea."[334] He also asked Hargrave to arrange for John's passage as a cabin passenger and gave Hargrave permission to charge his account for any supplies that John would need. Both boys reached England safely and Rev'd. Cockran's letter thanking

[334] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fos. 1692-93, R. McLeod Sr. to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 26 July 1839.

Hargrave for his trouble reflects the sense of obligation that existed between Gentlemen during the period:

> I am extremely obliged to you for the kindness shown to my son Thomas in his Voyage to England. My boy in his letter mentioned your goodness to him with considerable feeling. Accept of my best thanks, being all that I can return for the benefit.[335]

Sometimes the Gentlemen's roles as surrogate fathers extended to arranging marriages and acting as fathers of the bride for absent friends. In a society where it was still uncommon for women to marry without the permission of their parents, especially the father, this duty was important and seems to have been performed by Gentlemen as a mark of respect for their friends. When James Anderson married Margaret McKenzie and her father was unable to be present to give her in marriage, William Nourse acted in his place. Nourse was pleased to be able to do this service for his friend and remarked to Hargrave, "had the satisfaction last fall of acting Pere *(sic)* for our worthy friend R. McKenzie C.F.*(sic)*—and giving away his daughter Margaret to my friend Mr. James Anderson of Lake Huron...."[336] Upon occasion, acting in such a manner could bring a certain amount of uneasiness for the Gentlemen who acted as surrogate fathers, especially if they were uncertain whether or not the natural fathers would approve of the matches in question. When George Simpson's mixed-blood daughter Maria married Robert Wallace after a whirlwind courtship in 1838, John Rowand acted in Simpson's place, but was quite uncomfortable about his role;

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335 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1861, Rev'd. Wm. Cockran to James Hargrave, Grand Rapids, 1840.

336 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1829, Wm. Nourse to James Hargrave, Sault Ste. Marie, 1 May 1840.

consequently, he attempted to rationalise his actions when he explained the situation to Hargrave:

> all what I could say to Miss I could not persuade her to wait to get a Fathers consent....That business caused me much uneasiness...perhaps our friend the Governor will blame me, however he was never more fond of his amiable wife himself, than those two seemed to be between you and me N.H. [Norway House] is not a fit place to have young ladies under the same roof with young Batchelors *(sic)* as they were fixed there....[337]

Unfortunately, this marriage ended in a disastrous double drowning, but the Correspondence does not indicate that Simpson attached any blame to Rowand.

Rowand's comments to Hargrave are representative of the equality and inequality that were simultaneously present in male-male relationships between Gentlemen in the fur trade. As carriers of nineteenth-century gender beliefs, the Gentlemen used their understanding of masculinity to separate themselves from other men in the fur trade. By identifying themselves as a group with common beliefs and aspirations, all Gentlemen achieved a rough equality. They judged each other according to a common definition of masculinity and created a web of friendships that stretched across Hudson's Bay Company territories and allowed them to share, reinforce, and implement their beliefs in fur trade society. Even though the strong male support network that they formed via their constant interchange of letters and their understanding of the responsibilities involved in friendship created a firm base upon which to establish an homogeneous fur trade society, some Gentlemen still occupied positions of more authority than others. The letters between Gentlemen indicate that they were fully aware of

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[337] Glazebrook, ed., no. 108, "John Rowand to James Hargrave, Ft. Edmonton, 31 December 1838," p. 274.

the exalted position held by George Simpson and the disastrous effects that his displeasure could have on their careers; consequently, although criticism of Simpson's autocratic nature and his absentee command increased in the 1840s, the complaints seem to have been limited to the Gentlemen's private correspondence.[338] However, Simpson was not alone in his elevated status. While not as powerful as the Governor, the Chief Factors also had more power than average Gentlemen; thus, the approval or disapproval of a Chief Factor could influence a Gentleman's career.

In order for a young man to be a social or economic success in nineteenth-century Britain or in the fur trade, he had to show that he possessed the desired traits and the correct mindset;[339] however, even these were not necessarily enough. Often, the difference between success and failure lay in the possession of influential friends and mentors. Consequently, it became increasingly important for young men to establish relationships of patronage and clientage with older, more experienced men; conversely,

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[338] See NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 12, fo. 3154, Wm. Todd to James Hargrave, Red River, 3 January 1845; NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 12, fo. 3232, Donald Ross to James Hargrave, Norway House, 29 April 1845; NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 12, fo. 3410, John Todd to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 24 February 1846; and NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 13, fo. 3666, A. Christie to James Hargrave, Ft. Garry, 6 December 1847.

[339] "Complaint of an Antediluvian On the Decay of the Picturesque," ***Blackwood's***, no. CLXII vol. XXVII (February 1830): 262. By 1830, the middle-class masculine mindset which placed business before everything else had become so prevalent that a contributor to ***Blackwood's*** was prompted to complain:

> Everything now-a-days must be turned to *account*. There is no generous consecration of even the most worthless elements of natural loveliness—no flinging in of the meanest dole for beauty's sake. Wherever a farthing can be made, the plough share of ruin is driven....We are all for utility....

While this statement is somewhat hyperbolic, it certainly applies to George Simpson. Hargrave and his other correspondents also seem to have placed a great deal of importance in the Company and their work. While their wives and families were important to them, their business interests generally took precedence. This commercial mindset was associated with manliness and Gentlemen who placed their business interests below their personal interests were considered unmanly and weak.

mentoring relationships provided older men with a means of repaying their debts to their mentors and ensuring continuity in the trade.

Although well-educated, personable, and intelligent, Hargrave did not have the necessary connections to become a commercial success in Britain. In 1820, the year Hargrave left for Canada, a contributor to ***Blackwood's*** commented that in order for a man to be a success he had "either to be somebody, or to be patronized by a person that is a somebody...."[340] Hargrave was not a 'somebody,' nor did he have influential friends in Britain. Consequently, he was very pleased at his good fortune in the fur trade:

> at my years, without a powerful friend or a shilling to aid me on my entrance into life, there are few young men...who are in better circumstances or have more cheering views of future affluence.[341]

Hargrave may not have had friends who facilitated his entrance into the fur trade, but he quickly made influential friends and developed mentoring relationships with the Gentlemen under whom he served. As previously mentioned, Hargrave served under three of the most important men in the fur trade: John George McTavish, Donald McKenzie, and Alexander Christie. Although very competent businessmen, these Gentlemen shared a 'manly' philosophy of business which was not built on personal competition, but on co-operation. Impressed by Hargrave's character, ambition, application, and ability, they acted as his advisors and groomed him for promotion. Naturally, Hargrave was eager to move up in the business and was grateful for the interest his mentors showed in him, and he also shared

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340 "The Ayrshire Legatees," ***Blackwood's***, no. XLV vol. III (December 1820): 267.

341 NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 7, James Hargrave to his mother, York Factory, 1 July 1832. See also NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 7, James Hargrave to Donald McKenzie, York Factory, 15 February 1832.

their philosophy of business and was concerned with helping those who followed him:

> There is room on it [the ladder of life] for the whole of the host of climbers:—my determination is to plod on, with attention to the security of my footing and a resolution to strengthen rather than weaken that of my neighbours where my puny efforts can be of any avail,—and should any be so unmanly as to try and notch a spoke beneath my toes, I know your friendly hand will be as I have ever found it, a stay in the day of adversity.[342]

As Hargrave rose to a position of power and respectability in the fur trade, he was able to help younger men in the same way that he had been helped. The Correspondence indicates that between 1831 and 1850, Hargrave was involved in at least three separate mentoring relationships. Each of the young men in question—Archy McKinlay, William McTavish, and Gavin Hamilton—were counselled and groomed for success by Hargrave. As Hargrave's mentorship of Hamilton in Scotland is not as significant to this thesis as the relationships with McKinlay and McTavish in the Country, it will only be acknowledged and not examined.[343]

Hargrave's mentoring relationships with Archy McKinlay and William McTavish arose as a result of his friendships with their relatives in the fur trade. McKinlay was related to James McMillan through marriage and

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342 NAC MG19, A, 21 Series 1 vol. 21, James Hargrave to D. McKenzie, York Factory, 4 September 1829.

343 Hamilton was the teenaged son of an old Scottish friend and benefactor, Rev'd. G.J. Hamilton. When Hargrave was in Scotland in 1838, he discovered that his friend had died, leaving young Gavin an orphan. Although a group of local gentlemen had raised a subscription that assured the young man a good education, Hargrave felt that he owed it to his old friend to try and secure Gavin's future by obtaining him a position with the Company when he completed his training. With this in mind, he put the situation directly to Governor Pelly who approved his request and added Hamilton to the list of Clerks. Hargrave then established a correspondence with Hamilton to provide him with guidance for his future. NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to J.H. Pelly, London, 5 March 1838; NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 12, James Hargrave to J. Clegg, London, 8 March 1838; and NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fo. 1613, J. Clegg to James Hargrave, Byethorn, 9 March 1839.

McTavish was J.G. McTavish's nephew (and later Hargrave's brother-in-law). It is largely through Hargrave's correspondence with these perpetually concerned relatives and co-mentors that the record of McKinlay's and McTavish's progress has been preserved. Both of these young men quickly won Hargrave's approval, for they possessed the appropriate male character traits to meet their mentor's definition of masculinity. McKinlay's steadiness and application astounded Hargrave. In 1832, after working with McKinlay for over a year, he commented to McMillan: "I have never really met with equal industry & steadiness in one so young.—I indeed fear sometimes he will injure his health, which however is at present excellent."[344] McKinlay's health survived these rigours, and by 1835, after being groomed by Hargrave and Alexander Christie, he emerged as "a smart and active man of business...modest and quiet...a useful good humoured and willing Clerk."[345] William McTavish was also a steady and industrious worker, and Hargrave felt that his intelligence and his aptitude for business would make him a prime candidate for promotion. When he first became acquainted with McTavish in 1833, Hargrave sent a positive assessment of the young man's character to the elder McTavish: "Your young relative is a fine gentlemanly well informed fellow, of hale constitution, and smart & active—the proper metal for an intelligent & efficient Trader."[346] By 1835, he was certain that young McTavish would do well and was making efforts to ensure that his name and character were familiar to George Simpson: "Young McTavish has

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[344] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 8, James Hargrave to J. McMillan, York Factory, 13 September 1832.

[345] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 11, James Hargrave to J. McMillan, York Factory, 30 July 1835.

[346] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 9, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 26 September 1833.

displayed great application, and...improvement & information in business.—He has a clear head, a keen apprehension of what is explained to him, and if I mistake not will eventually become a very useful and valuable man in the country."[347] While Hargrave's excitement over his upcoming marriage to McTavish's sister undoubtedly coloured his approval of the young man in 1838, his comments to J.G. McTavish made it clear that he believed he had found someone capable of becoming his successor :

> I have him placed in the Genl. *(sic)* Store where he occupies the same position I so long filled;—It is only hard justice to him to say that I have never had one at the Factory in whom I can more confidently repose trust.—His clear head, careful habits and steady interested conduct, are everything I could desire;—and I believe I really am rather not over easily pleased....[348]

Although these young men did not remain stationed at York Factory, Hargrave maintained a paternalistic correspondence with each of them and provided them with whatever advice he felt would aid them in their personal lives and in their careers. Nor were his suggestions unappreciated. While his marriage to Letitia McTavish moved his relationship with William onto a more equal footing, he remained a mentor and father figure for Archy McKinlay. As early as 1835, McKinlay wrote to express his gratitude for Hargrave's mentoring:

> I need not try to express the gratefulness I feel for the kind interest you have at all times taken in my welfare ever since I put my foot on the shores of America together with the high opinion you have formed of me and the fatherly advice you give me in every letter shews *(sic)* me the value of a true friend even at a far distance, and

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[347] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 10, James Hargrave to George Simpson, York Factory, 1 March 1835.

[348] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C80) Series 2 no. 13, James Hargrave to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 24 March 1838.

> likewise shews *(sic)* me how much I should regard them by due attention.—[349]

In spite of McKinlay's respect for Hargrave's advice, he broke one of Hargrave's cardinal rules and married a mixed-blood woman, Sarah Ogden, the daughter of the young man's 'Bourgeois' in the early 1840s. When he informed Hargrave of this development, his apologetic tone and his careful explanation of the extended period of time that he had known Sarah prior to the marriage indicated that he knew Hargrave would disapprove of his choice. As his mentor, Hargrave had created such an impression on this young man that he still sought his approval, even as an adult.[350]

Male-male relationships such as these ensured a sense of continuity in the fur trade. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Hargrave and his correspondents lived in a society that judged men according to nineteenth-century British middle-class gender beliefs and placed a high value on male-male relationships. In fur trade society, where the Gentlemen formed a relatively small group, these beliefs were employed to emphasise the separation between the Gentlemen and all of the other groups of men involved in the fur trade. As the definition of masculinity became more rigid in the first half of the nineteenth century, and social sanctions against behaviours which were deemed unacceptable increased, Gentlemen looked to each other for equal power relationships. In a world that valued regularity and conformity, respectability emerged as the primary character trait for middle-class men. Steadiness, industriousness, honesty, thriftiness, and self-

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[349] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C73) Series 1 fos. 990-91, A. McKinlay to James Hargrave, Old Ft. Garry, 27 February 1835.

[350] NAC MG19, A, 21 (C74) Series 1 fos. 1964-65, A. McKinlay to James Hargrave, Ockanagan *(sic)*, 9 April 1841.

control were some of the other traits that combined to created an image of the ideal middle-class man.

An examination of the Hargrave Correspondence indicates that Gentlemen in the fur trade during this period brought these beliefs about masculinity with them to the Country and used them to judge each other. Through an intricate and far-reaching web of letters, the Gentlemen were able to share, reinforce, and implement their beliefs and gradually incorporate them to modify fur trade society. Gentlemen who met these standards of masculinity were praised and won the respect and approval of their peers and superiors; Gentlemen who did not possess these traits or went beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour were criticised and occasionally ostracised. Hargrave and his colleagues chose their friends from men who appeared to possess these desirable character traits.

For nineteenth-century Gentlemen who lived in an hierarchical society, male friendships were extremely important, for they provided them with an opportunity to participate in equal power relationships. Hargrave's letters and those of his correspondents reveal that they understood friendship to be formulated around a complex set of reciprocities which evolved from the gender beliefs which defined masculinity for them. For these Gentlemen, friendship involved acting as moral guardians for each other, taking up each other's causes and acting as their friends' champions, or even taking over their friends' domestic duties and playing the part of surrogate father.

In spite of the fact that Gentlemen in fur trade society formed a roughly equal power group, inequalities did exist between young, inexperienced men and older, more powerful men. Mentoring relationships often grew up between these two groups of men which helped to reinforce the belief systems

which were valued in fur trade society and thus ensure at least an element of continuity between the generations of officers. Hargrave and his friends participated in mentoring relationships both as clients and as patrons. As a young man, Hargrave won the approval of important and well-respected fur trade leaders who provided him with guidance and prepared him for advancement; as a middle-aged man, he continued the tradition when he acted as a mentor for several young men who met his requirements for masculinity.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

By the middle of the nineteenth century, fur trade society had begun to consolidate along British lines. As the power base in the fur trade shifted from Indian to white during this period and the officers in the Hudson's Bay Company identified more closely with the British middle-class, they incorporated British middle-class beliefs and values into fur trade society. Many of the resultant changes, including the social stratification which divided Indians and mixed bloods from whites, can be linked to the changing British middle-class gender beliefs held by these men. An examination of the Hargrave Correspondence has shown that Gentlemen in the fur trade during this period brought their beliefs about femininity and masculinity with them to the Country and used them as criteria for judging all of the individuals with whom they came in contact. These gender beliefs and judgments were dispersed through a complex male support network formed by a spider web of personal correspondences which stretched across Hudson's Bay Company territories and acted to transform and homogenize the fur trade social order.

Gender is the social system by which the actual and perceived biological differences between the sexes are incorporated into the the way that societies define masculinity and femininity. Gender orders reality by establishing inequalities, polarities, and differences between the sexes. Men are presumed to be inherently superior and thus the rightful heirs to the valued positions in a society; concomitantly, they are assigned a complex array of the society's most highly valued character traits. On the other hand, as men's

polar opposites, women are assigned inferior and subservient societal positions; in addition, they are presumed to possess negative or subordinate character traits. Although the specific details of these disparities vary according to culture and historical period, they are generally perceived by contemporaries to be both natural and fixed. Since these beliefs are used as a basis for establishing all other social relationships, they are also inextricably intertwined with power and class. Those individuals (usually male) who make up a society's primary power group use their gender beliefs to separate themselves from all other individuals and groups in the society. Those who are perceived to be closest to the ruling group are assigned the highest proportion of positive male traits; individuals and groups that occupy lower positions are assigned proportionally more negative female traits. As such, any changes to the gender beliefs which define femininity and masculinity entails modifying the social structure of the society; consequently, resistance is generally high and modifications do not occur quickly.

Gender has traditionally been used by social scientists and feminist historians to explore the status of women; however, as this thesis has attempted to prove, it can be extended to study both male-female and male-male relationships effectively and provide a new and important perspective on the formation and modification of social structure. By examining the changing social structure of the fur trade in the first half of the nineteenth century through the lens of gender, this society emerges an an entity with distinct historical roots striving to elevate its level of civilisation to emulate that of its parent.

James Hargrave and his correspondents form a representative body of nineteenth-century Hudson's Bay Company Gentlemen. They were mainly

of British origin and shared common beliefs, ideas, and aspirations. As carriers of nineteenth-century British middle-class gender beliefs, these men were the product of changes which had begun to modify the definitions of femininity and masculinity in Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century. During this period, evangelicalism combined with intellectual, economic, political, and social reforms to begin reshaping the physical, commercial, and psychological make-up of the nation. These changes and the unsettling effects of the French Revolution fostered anomie and resulted in progressively conservative reactions from the groups in power. Not surprisingly, the definitions of femininity and masculinity which emerged from the midst of this uncertainty were more constrained and more class conscious, with stricter sanctions against societally unacceptable behaviours.

While traditional interpretations of women's nature had not only defined women as intellectually and spiritually inferior to men, but also linked them to the forces of chaos (and occasionally evil), eighteenth-century moralists and thinkers resolved that women were men's intellectual and spiritual equals and were more closely associated with order than chaos. However, female biological differences were still perceived to make women inherently inferior to men and contemporary thinkers believed that female goodness could only exist if female sexuality was controlled and subordinated. Consequently, the definition of femininity that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and grew stronger in the nineteenth century re-emphasised women's traditional roles and their subordinate position in society. Chastity became the predominant character trait of the ideal middle-class woman; restraint, modesty, submission, compliance, and piety were considered only slightly less important. Women who were unchaste or

lacked these other necessary character traits were vilified and immediately associated with the uncontrollable sexuality that was presumed to be an inborn character flaw of lower-class women.

The Hargrave Correspondence shows that by the middle of the nineteenth century the definition of femininity in fur trade society echoed these British beliefs. Hargrave and his generation of Gentlemen brought these beliefs to the Country and applied them unilaterally to all of the women with whom they came in contact. As these Gentlemen gained positions of authority and respectability, and the British as a group came to hold more power in the fur trade, these beliefs replaced earlier, more liberal definitions of femininity. Although little work has been done to compare the gender beliefs of eighteenth-century fur traders and the Indian groups with which they became allied, the acceptance of Indian women as wives and the development of the institution of country marriage reveal that there were enough similarities between the two groups' interpretations of femininity to allow this interaction.

The Hargrave Correspondence indicates that nineteenth-century British middle-class gender beliefs were beginning to have an effect on male-female relationships in fur trade society as early as the 1820s. When chastity became the predominant female trait for women in fur trade society in the 1830s, the letters reflect the scandals that were created when these new beliefs were applied to women who had not yet adapted to the new model. The Gentlemen appear to have believed that Indian and mixed-blood women who did not conform to their model of female purity were innately sexual and insatiable, characteristics which relegated them to the lower classes. As uncontrolled female sexuality came to be viewed as a threat to civilisation,

the institution of country marriage, which did not control female sexuality by placing women under the legal guardianship of men, was replaced by religious marriage, which did. By the end of the 1840s, Indian women had become completely unacceptable marital partners for respectable middle-class Gentlemen. Their differing definition of femininity resulted in their being placed at the bottom of the fur trade social order. Mixed-blood women occupied a position between Indian and white women. Discussions between the Gentlemen about the education of mixed-blood daughters and comments on mixed-blood women in general make it clear that these women were expected to be more morally frail than white women; however, they also believed that careful and systematic moral educations could counter these tendencies. Mixed-blood women who conformed to these white gender beliefs were accepted as suitable marital partners for Gentlemen and appear to have been granted the same status as white women in fur trade society. White women occupied the highest position in the female social order. They were expected to conform to British middle-class gender beliefs and the records of domestic relationships between the officers and their wives reveal that they generally did.

While this revised definition of femininity was modifying male-female relationships in the fur trade, a stricter interpretation of masculinity was also being applied to male-male relationships. By the end of the eighteenth century, the ideal of middle-class masculinity had become predominant in Britain. Respectability, steadiness, industriousness, thriftiness, self-control, and a general seriousness of character came to be viewed as essential masculine characteristics. Men who did not possess these characteristics or conform to this model were assigned negative female traits and were

associated with the lower classes who were presumed to be indulgent, uncontrolled, and essentially violent.

Hargrave and his correspondents applied these beliefs to the men with whom they worked. Neither the Indian nor the mixed-blood men conformed to their model of masculinity; consequently, like Indian and mixed-blood women, they were judged to be naturally flawed. As power shifted away from the Indians and towards the whites in the first half of the century, relationships between these two groups became increasingly unequal. The Indian definition of masculinity diverged the most from the British model, so Indian men were assigned the most character flaws and were ranked the least important in the male social order. Mixed-blood men's Indian heritage was believed to have left them with many of the same character flaws as Indian men, but their active and visual presence in the fur trade ensured that they were placed higher in the social order. Like their female counterparts, mixed-blood men who were able to conform to the British model of masculinity were often successful in gaining the acceptance of the British in fur trade society. This was especially true if they were able to win influential friends among the Gentlemen who were willing to act as their mentors and forward their causes with the administration.

The Gentlemen also applied the same definitions of masculinity to their superiors and peers. Just as white women were expected to conform to the contemporary definition of femininity, white men were expected to meet the requirements of the masculine model. Gentlemen who met these standards won the praise and respect of their colleagues; those Gentlemen who did not or went beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour were criticised or, in exceptional cases, ostracised.

In a society that placed a high value on male-male relationships, friendships between Gentlemen provided an opportunity for men to develop equal power relationships. Hargrave and his correspondents built deep and often longlasting friendships during their sojourns in the Country. These Gentlemen shared the same definition of masculinity and chose their friends from men who exhibited highly valued positive male character traits. As men who placed a great deal of importance on respectability, devotion to duty, and fair play, their friendships reflected these values, defined as they were by reciprocal duties and obligations. While sharing gossip, triumphs, and tragedies played an important part in these men's relationships, they also acted as moral guardians and champions for each other, and upon occasion even acted as surrogate fathers for each other's families.

Mentoring relationships arose when friendships were formed between Gentlemen of unequal age and authority in the fur trade. These vertical support networks established lines of patronage and clientage between older, more experienced, and societally respected men in positions of authority, and younger men whose personalities, characters, and abilities made them promising candidates for promotion. Gender beliefs played an important part in these relationships, for the Correspondence shows that older Gentlemen mentored those younger men who fulfilled the elders' definition of masculinity. Consequently, by the time that Hargrave and his companions began to act as mentors in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, they chose to promote the interests of young men who showed the requisite qualities of respectability, steadiness, application, and aptitude. Thus, the definition of masculinity that was held by Hargrave's generation of officers was employed to train the subsequent generation.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, middle-class British gender beliefs were firmly established in fur trade society. They had played an influential role in redefining femininity and masculinity in the fur trade and consequently helped to establish a three-tiered social structure which placed Indians at the bottom, mixed bloods in the middle, and whites at the top. The incorporation of these increasingly rigid gender beliefs in fur trade society during its formative stage created beliefs and stereotypes about Indian and mixed-blood men and women that were to become lodged in the Canadian social conscience.

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